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# GUESSES AT TRUTH

BY

TWO BROTHERS:

SECOND EDITION:  
WITH LARGE ADDITIONS.

SECOND SERIES:

*Μάντις ὁ ἀριστος ὅστις εἰκάζει καλῶς.*

·The best divine is he who well divines.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR TAYLOR AND WALTON,

UPPER GOWER STREET :

SOLD BY MACMILLAN, CAMBRIDGE.

1848.

Hardly do we guess aright at things that are upon earth ;  
and with labour do we find the things that are before us :  
but the things that are in heaven who hath searched out ?

*Wisdom of Solomon, ix. 16.*

Vasta ut plurimum solent esse quae inania : solida  
contrahuntur maxime, et in parvo sita sunt.

*Bacon, Inst. Magn. Praef.*



## ADVERTISEMENT.

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This volume is called a second Edition ; for a portion of it was contained in the former : but more than three fourths are new. The first eight sheets were printed off ten years ago : hence, in the discussion on the Progress of mankind, no notice is taken of the views concerning Development in reference to religious truth, which have recently been exciting so much agitation and confusion. Indeed almost all the new matter inserted in this Volume was written above ten years since, though, in transcribing it for the press, I have often modified and enlarged it to bring it into conformity with my present convictions. A succession of other works has hitherto interrupted the prosecution of this ; and several are now calling me away from it. But, as soon as I can get my hands free, I hope, God willing, to publish a second Edition of the original Second Volume. This second Series only goes down to the end of the original First Volume.

J. C. H.

ROCKEND.

May 10th, 1848.





ERRATA.

P. 58, l. 21. dele comma after *world*.

— 144, l. 3. read, *We have learnt*.



## GUESSES AT TRUTH.

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IN the wars of the middle ages, when the armies were lying in their camps, single knights would often sally forth to disport themselves in breaking a lance. In modern warfare too the stillness of a night before a battle is ever and anon interrupted by a solitary cannon-shot; which does not always fall without effect. Ahab was slain by an arrow let off at a venture: nor are his the only *spolia opima* that Chance has borne away to adorn her triumphs.

Detacht thoughts in literature, under whatsoever name they may be cast forth into the world,—Maxims, Aphorisms, Essays, Resolves, Hints, Meditations, Aids to Reflexion, Guesses,—may be regarded as similar sallies and disportings of those who are loth to lie rusting in inaction, though they do not feel themselves called to act more regularly and in mass. And these too are not wholly without worth and power; which is not uniformly in proportion to bulk. One of the lessons of the late wars has been, that large disciplined bodies are not the only effective force:

Cossacks and Guerillas, we have seen, may render good service in place and season. A curious and entertaining treatise might be written *de vi quae residet in minimis*. Even important historical events have been kindled by the spark of an epigram or a jest.

In some cases, as in Novalis, we see youthful genius gushing in radiant freshness, and sparkling and bringing out some bright hue on every object around, until it has found or made itself a more continuous channel. And as spring sheds its blossoms, so does autumn its golden fruit. Mature and sedate wisdom has been fond of summing up the results of its experience in weighty sentences. Solomon did so : the wise men of India and of Greece did so : Bacon did so : Goethe in his old age took delight in doing so. The sea throws up shells and pebbles that it has smoothed by rolling them in its bosom : and what though children alone should play with them ? "Cheered by their merry shouts, old Ocean smiles."

A dinner of fragments is said often to be the best dinner. So are there few minds but might furnish some instruction and entertainment out of their scraps, their odds and ends of thought. They who cannot weave a uniform web, may at least produce a piece of patchwork ; which may be useful, and not without a charm of its own. The very sharpness and abruptness with which truths must be asserted, when they are to stand singly, is not ill fitted to startle and rouse sluggish

and drowsy minds. Nor is the present shattered and disjointed state of the intellectual world unaptly represented by a collection of fragments. When the waters are calm, they reflect an image in its unity and completeness; but when they are tossing restlessly, it splits into bits. So too, when the central fires are raging, they shake the mainland, and strew it with ruins, but now and then cast up islands. And if we look through history, the age of Asia seems to have past away; and we are approaching to that of Polynesia.

Only whatsoever may be brought together in these pages, though but a small part be laid within the courts of the temple itself, may we never stray so far as to lose it out of sight: and along with the wood and hay and stubble, may there be here and there a grain of silver, if not of gold. u.

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Poetry is the key to the hieroglyphics of Nature.

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On the outside of things seek for differences; on the inside for likenesses.

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Notions may be imported by books from abroad: ideas must be grown at home by thought.

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If the imagination be banisht from the garden of Eden, she will take up her abode in the island of Armida; and that soon changes into Circe's. u.

---

Why have oracles ceased? Among other reasons, because we have the books of the wise in their stead. But these too will not answer aright, unless the right question be put to them. Nay, when the answer has been uttered, he who hears it must know how to interpret and to apply it.

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u.

One may develop an idea: it is what God has taught us to do in his successive revelations. But one cannot add to it, least of all in another age.

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Congruity is not beauty: but it is essential to beauty. In every wellbred mind the perception of incongruity impedes and interrupts the perception of beauty. Hence the recent opening of the view upon St Martin's church has marred the beauty of the portico: the heavy steeple presses down on it and crushes it. The combination is as monstrous as it would be to tack on the last act of Addison's *Cato* to the *Philoctetes* of Sophocles.

In truth steeples, which belong to the upward-looking principle of Christian architecture, never harmonize well with the horizontal earthly character of the Greek temple. To understand the beauty of the latter, one must see it free from this extraneous and incompatible incumbrance. One should see it too with a southern sky to crown it and look through it.

---

u.

Homer calls words *winged*: and the epithet is peculiarly appropriate to his; which do indeed seem to fly,—so rapid and light is their motion; and which have been flying ever since over the whole of the peopled earth, and still hover and brood over many an awakening soul. Latin marches; Italian floats; French hops; English walks; German rumbles along: the music of Klopstock's hexameters is not unlike the tune with which a broad-wheel waggon tries to solace itself, when crawling down a hill. But Greek flies, especially in Homer.

His meaning, or rather the meaning of his age, in assigning that attribute to words, was probably to express their power of giving wings to thoughts, whereby they fly from one breast to another. For a like reason may letters be called *winged*, as speeding the flight of thoughts far beyond the reach of sounds, and prolonging it for ages after the sounds have died away; so that the thoughts entrusted to them are wafted to those who are far off both in space and in time. Above all does the epithet belong to printing: for, by means of its leaden types, that which has been bred in the secret caverns of the mind, no sooner comes forth, than thousands of wings are given to it at once, and it roams abroad in a thousand bodies; each several body moreover being the exact counterpart of all the others, to a degree scarcely attained by any other process of nature or of art.



Των, ὥστ' ὀρνίθων πετηρῶν ἔθνεα πολλὰ,  
 χηνῶν ἢ γεράων ἢ κύκνων δουλιχοδείρων,  
 ἔνθα καὶ ἔνθα ποτῶνται ἀγαλλόμεναι πτερύγεσσω,  
 κλαγγηδὸν προκαθίζόντων, σμαραγεὶ δέ τε λειμών.

υ.

The schoolmen have been accused of syllogizing without facts. Their accusers, those I mean who sophisticate and explain away the dictates of their consciousness, do worse: they syllogize against facts, facts not doubtful and obscure, but manifest and certain; seeing that "to feel a thing in oneself is the surest way of knowing it." South, Vol. ii. p. 236.

They who profess to give the essence of things, in most cases merely give the extract; or rather an extract, or, it may be, several, pickt out at chance or will. They repeat the blunder of the Greek dunce, who brought a brick as a sample of a house: and, how many such dunces do we still find, calling on us to judge of books by like samples! At best they just tap the cask, and offer you a cup of its contents, having previously half filled the cup with water, or some other less innocent diluent.

υ.

When a man cannot walk without crutches, he would fain make believe they are stilts. Like most impostors too, he gives ear to his own lie; till, lifting up one of them in a fit of passion, to knock down a person who doubts him, he falls to

the ground. And there he has to remain sprawling: the crutch, by help of which he contrived to stand, will not enable him to rise. U.

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*What do you mean by the lords spiritual?* ask Madame de Stael: *are they so called because they are so spirituels?* How exactly do *esprit* and *spirituel* express what the French deem the highest power and glory of the human mind! A large part of their literature is *mousseux*: and whatever is so soon grows flat.

Our national word and quality is *sense*; which may perhaps betray a tendency to materialism; but which at all events comprehends a greater body of thought, thought that has settled down and become substantiated in maxims. U.

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Hardly any period of afterlife is so rich in vivid and rapturous enjoyment, as that when knowledge is first unfolding its magical prospects to a genial and ardent youth; when his eyes open to discern the golden network of thought wherein man has robed the naked limbs of the world, and to see all that he feels teeming and glowing within his breast, embodied in glorified and deathless forms in the living gallery of Poetry. So long as we continue under magisterial discipline and guidance, we are apt to regard our studies as a mechanical and often irksome taskwork. Our growing presumption is loth to acknowledge that we are unable to walk alone, that our minds need

leadingstrings so much longer than our bodies. But when the impatient scholar finds himself set free, with the blooming paradise of imagination and thought spread out before him, his mind, like the butterfly, by which the Greeks so aptly and characteristically typified their spirit, exulting in the beauty which it everywhere perceives, both without itself and within, and delighting to prove and exercise its newly developed faculty of admiring and loving, will hover from flower to flower, from charm to charm; and now, seeming chiefly to rejoice in its motion, and in the glancing of its bright and many-coloured wings, merely snatches a passing kiss from each, now sinks down on some chosen favorite, and loses all consciousness of sense or life in the ecstasy of its devotion.

In more advanced years, the student rather resembles the honey-seeking, honey-gathering, honey-storing bee. He estimates: he balances: he compares. He picks out what seems best to him from the banquet lying before him: and even this he has to season to his own palate. But at first everything attracts, everything pleases him: The simple sense, whether of action or of feeling, whatever may be their object, is sufficient. The mind roams from fancy to fancy, from truth to truth, from one world of thought to another world of thought, with an ease, rapidity, and elastic power, like that with which it has been imagined that the soul, when freed from the

body, will wander from star to star. Nay, even after the wild landscape, through which youth strayed at will, has been laid out into fields and gardens, and enclosed with fences and hedges, after the footsteps, which had bounded over the flower-strewn grass, have been circumscribed within trim gravel walks, the vision of its former happiness will still at times float before the mind in its dreams. Unless it has been bent down and hardened by the opposition it has had to struggle with, it will still retain a dim vivifying hope, although it may not venture to shape that hope into words, that it may again one day behold a similar harmonious universe bursting forth from the jarring and fragmentary chaos of hollow realities,—that in its own place and station it may, as Frederic Schlegel expresses it,

Build for all arts one temple of communion,  
Itself a new example of their union ;—

and that it may at least witness the prelude to that final consummation, when, as in the beginning, all things will again be one. U.

---

Set a company of beginners in archery shooting at a mark. Their arrows will all fly wide of it, some on one side, some on the opposite: and while they are all thus far off; many a dispute will arise as to which of them has come the nearest. But in proportion as they improve in skill, their arrows will fall nearer to the mark, and to each other: and when they are fixt in the target, there

is much less controversy about them. Now suppose them to attain to such a pitch of mastery, that every arrow shall go straight to the bull's eye : they will all coincide. This may help us to understand how the differences of the wise and good, which are often so perplexing and distracting now, will be reconciled hereafter ; when the film of mortality is drawn away from their eyes, and their faculties are strengthened to see truth, and to strive after it, and to reach it. a

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Only if we would hit the truth, we must indeed aim at it. Else the more we improve in handling the bow, the further away from it shall we send our arrows. As for that numerous class, who, instead of aiming at truth, have merely aimed at glorifying themselves, their arrows will be found to have recoiled, like that of Adrastus in Statius, and to be sticking their deadly barbed points into their own souls. Alas ! there are many such pseudo-Sebastians walking about, bristled with suicidal darts, living martyrs to their own vain-glory. u.

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Heroism is active genius ; genius, contemplative heroism. Heroism is the self-devotion of genius manifesting itself in action ; *ἡ θελας τινος φύσεως ἐνίπνευα*, as a Greek would more closely have defined it.

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These are the men to employ, in peace as well

as in war, the men who are afraid of no fire, except hell-fire.

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How few, how easily to be counted up, are the cardinal names in the history of the human mind! Thousands and tens of thousands spend their days in the preparations which are to speed the predestined change, in gathering and amassing the materials which are to kindle and give light and warmth, when the fire from heaven has descended on them. But when that flame has once blazed up, its very intensity too often shortens its duration. Many, yea without number, are the sutlers and pioneers, the engineers and artisans, who attend the march of intellect. Many are busied in building and fitting up and painting and emblazoning the chariot; others in lessening the friction of the wheels: others move forward in detachments, and level the way it is to pass over, and cut down the obstacles which would impede its progress. And these too have their reward. If so be they labour diligently in their calling, not only will they enjoy that calm contentment which diligence in the lowliest task never fails to win; not only will the sweat of their brows be sweet, and the sweetener of the rest that follows; but, when the victory is at last achieved, they come in for a share in the glory: even as the meanest soldier who fought at Marathon or at Leipzig became a sharer in the glory of those saving days; and within his own household circle, the

approbation of which approaches the nearest to that of an approving conscience, was lookt upon as the representative of all his brother heroes, and could tell such tales as made the tear glisten on the cheek of his wife, and lit up his boy's eyes with an unwonted sparkling eagerness.

At length however, when the appointed hour is arrived, and everything is ready, the master-mind leaps into the seat that is awaiting him, and fixes his eye on heaven; and the selfmoving wheels roll onward; and the road prepared for them is soon past over; and the pioneers and sutlers are left behind; and the chariot advances further and further, until it has reacht its goal, and stands as an inviting beacon on the top of some distant mountain.

Hereupon the same labours recur. Thousands after thousands must toil to attain on foot to the spot, to which genius had been borne in an instant; and much time is spent in clearing and paving the road, so that the multitude may be able to go along it,—in securing for all by reflexion and analysis, what the prophetic glance of intuition had descried at once. And then again the like preparations are to be made for the advent of a second seer, of another epoch-making master-mind. Thus, when standing on the beach, you may see the *τρικυμία*, as the Greeks called it, out-running, not only the waves that went before, but those that come after it: and you may sometimes have to wait long, ere any reaches the mark, which

some mighty over-arching onrushing billow, some *fluctus decumanus* has left.

That there have been such third and tenth waves among men, will be apparent to those who call to mind how far the main herd of metaphysicians are still lagging behind Plato; and how, for near two thousand years, they were almost all content to feed on the crumbs dropt from Aristotle's table. It is proved by the fact, that even in physical science, the progress of which, it is now thought, nothing can check or retard,—and in which, more than in any other province of human activity, whatever knowledge is once gained forms a lasting fund for afterages to inherit and trade with,—not a single step was taken, not a single discovery made, as Whewell observes, either in mechanics or hydrostatics, between the time of Archimedes and of Galileo. Indeed the whole of Whewell's History of Science so strikingly illustrates the foregoing remarks, that, had they not been written long before, they might be supposed to be drawn immediately from it. The very plan of his work, which his subject forces upon him, divides itself in like manner into *preludes*, or periods of preparation, *inductive epochs*, when the great discoveries are made, and *sequels*, during which those discoveries are more fully established and developed, and more generally diffused.

Or, if we look to poetry,—to which the law of progression no way applies, any more than to beauty, but which, like beauty, is mostly in its



prime during the youth of a nation, and then is wont to decline,—so entirely do great poets soar beyond the reach, and almost beyond the ken of their own age, that we have only lately begun to have a right understanding of Shakspeare, or of the masters of the Greek drama,—to discern the principles which actuated them, the purposes they had in view, the laws they acknowledged, and the ideas they wisht to impersonate.

And is the case different in the arts? What do we see in architecture, but two ideas shining upon us out of the depth of bygone ages, that of the Greek temple, and that of the Gothic minster? Each of these was a living idea, and, as such, capable of manifold development, expansion, and modification. Nor were they unwilling to descend from their sacred throne, and to adapt themselves to the various wants of civil life. But what architectural idea has sprung up since? These are both the offspring of dark ages: what have we given birth to, since we dreamt we had a sun within us? One might almost suppose that, as Dryden says, in his stupid epigram on Milton, “The force of Nature could no further go;” so that, “To make a third, we joined the other two.” If of late years there has been any improvement, it consists solely in this, that we have separated the incongruous elements, and have tried to imitate each style in a manner more in accord with its original principle: although both of them are ill suited for divers

reasons to the needs of modern society. Yet nothing like a new idea has arisen, unless it be that of the factory, or the gashouse, or the gaol.

In sculpture, it is acknowledged, the Greeks still stand alone: and among the Greeks themselves the art declined after the age of Phidias and Praxiteles. In painting too who has there been for the last century worthy to hold Raphael's palette? Even in what might be deemed a mechanical excellence, colouring, we are put to shame, when we presume to shew our faces by the side of our greater ancestors.

U.

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From what has just been said, we may perceive how baseless and delusive is the vulgar notion of the march of mind, as necessarily exhibiting a steady regular advance, within the same nation, in all things. Even in the mechanical arts,—which depend so little on individual eminence, and which seem to require nothing more than the talents ordinarily forthcoming, according as there is a demand for them, in every people,—although the progress in them is more continuous, and outlasts that in higher things, yet, when the intellectual and moral energy of a nation has declined, that decline becomes perceptible after a while in the very lowest branches of trade and manufacture. Civilization will indeed outlive that energy, and keep company for a long time with luxury. But if luxury extinguishes the energy of a people, so that it cannot revive, its

civilization too will at length sink into barbarism. The decay of the Roman mind under the empire manifests itself not merely in its buildings, its statues, its language, but even in the coins, in the shape and workmanship of the commonest utensils.

In fact it is only when applied on the widest scale to the whole human race, that there is the slightest truth in the doctrine of the perfectibility, or rather of the progressiveness of man. Nay, even when regarded in this light, if we take nothing further into account, than what man can do and will do for himself, the notion of his perfectibility is as purely visionary, as the search after an elixir of life, or any other means of evading the pains and frailties of our earthly nature. The elixir of life we have ; the doctrine and means of perfectibility we have ; and we know them to be true and sure. But they are not of our own making. They do not lie within the compass of our own being. They come to us from without, from above. The only view of human nature, as left to itself, which is not incompatible with all experience, is not its perfectibility, but its corruptibility.

This is the view to which we are led by the history of the antediluvian world. This is the view represented in the primeval fable of the four ages ; the view express in those lines of the Roman poet :

*Aetas parentum, pejor avis, tulit  
Nos nequiores, mox daturos  
Progeniem vitiosiore.*

Indeed it is the view which man has in all ages taken of his own nature ; whether his judgement was determined by what he saw within himself, or in the world around him. It is the view to which he is prompted when his thoughts fall back on the innocence of his own childhood, when he compares it with his present debasement, and thinks of the struggles he has had to maintain against himself, and against others, in order to save himself from a still more abject degradation. The same lesson is taught him by the destinies of nations ; which, when they have left their wild mountain-sources, will mostly meander playfully for a while amid hills of beauty, and then flow majestically through plains of luxuriant richness, until at last they lose themselves in morasses, and choke themselves up with their own alluvion.

Of a like kind is the main theme and subject of poetry. Its scroll, as well as that of history, is like the roll which was spread out before the prophet, *written within and without* : and the matter of the writing is the same, *lamentations, and mourning, and woe*. When we have swallowed it submissively indeed, it turns to sweetness ; but not till then : in the words of the Greek philosopher, it is through terrour and pity that poetry purifies our feelings. Hence the name of the highest branch of poetry is become a synonym for every disaster : tragedy is but another term for lamentations and mourning and woe :

while epic poetry delights chiefly to dwell on the glories and fall of a nobler bygone generation. With such an unerring instinct does man's spirit recoil from the thought of an earthly elysium, as attainable by his own powers, however great and admirable they may be. What though his strength may seem vast enough to snatch the cup of bliss! what though his intellect appear subtle enough to compass or steal it! what though he send his armies and fleets round the globe, and his thoughts among the stars, and beyond them! he knows that the disease of his will is sure to undermine both his strength and his intellect; and that the higher they mount for the moment, the more terrible will their ruin be, and the more certain. He knows that Sisyphus is no less sure than Typhœus of being cast into hell through his own perversity; and that only through the flames of the funeral pile can Hercules rise into glory. It was reserved for a feeble-minded, earth-worshipping, self-idolizing age to find out that a tragedy should end happily.

Nor will the boasted discovery of modern times, the division of labour,—which the senters-out of allegories will suppose to be the truth veiled in the myth of Kehama's self-multiplication, when he is marching against Padalon to seize a throne among the gods,—avail to alter this. The Roman fable warns us what is sure to ensue, when the members split and set up singly: and the state of England at this day affords sad confirmation

to the lesson, that, unless they work together under the sway of a constraining higher spirit, they jar and clash and cumber and thwart and maim each other.

The notion entertained by some of the ancients, that, when a person has soared to an inordinate pitch of prosperity, the envy of the gods is provoked to cast him down, is merely a perversion of the true idea. Man's wont has ever been to throw off blame upon anything except himself; even upon the powers of heaven, when he can find no earthly scapegoat. At the same time this very notion bears witness of the pervading conviction that a state of earthly perfection is an impossibility. The fundamental idea both of the tragic *ἄτη* and of the historic *véneux* is, that calamities are the inevitable consequences of sins; that the chain which binds them together, though it may be hidden and mysterious, is indissoluble; and that, as man is sure to sin, more especially when puffed up by prosperity, he is also sure to perish. The sins of the fathers are indeed regarded by both as often visited upon the children, even to the third and fourth generation; not however without their becoming in some measure accessory to the guilt. Were they not so, the calamities would be as harmless as the wounds of Milton's angels.

This however, which is the essential point in the whole argument,—the concatenation of moral and physical evil, and the everlasting necessity by

which sin must bring forth death,—has mostly been left out of thought by the broachers and teachers of perfectibility. Perceiving that man's outward relations appeared to be perfectible, they fancied that his nature was so likewise: or rather they scarcely heeded his nature, and lookt solely at his outward relations. They saw that his dominion over the external world seemed to admit of an indefinite extension. They saw that his knowledge of outward things had long been progressive; that vast stores had been piled up, which were sure to increase, and could scarcely be diminisht: so, by a not unnatural confusion, they assumed that the greater amount of knowledge implied a proportionate improvement in the faculties by which the knowledge is acquired; although a large empire can merely attest the valour of those who won it, without affording evidence either way with regard to those who inherit it. All the while too it was forgotten that a man's clothes are not himself, and that, if the spark of life in him goes out, his clothes, however gorgeous, must sink and crumble upon his crumbling body.

The strange inconsistency is, that the very persons who have indulged in the most splendid visions about the perfectibility of mankind, have mostly rejected the only principle of perfectibility which has ever found place in man, the only principle by which man's natural corruptibility has ever been checkt, the only principle by which

nations or individuals have ever been regenerated. The natural life of nations, as well as of individuals, has its fixed course and term. It springs forth, grows up, reaches its maturity, decays, perishes. Only through Christianity has a nation ever risen again: and it is solely on the operation of Christianity that we can ground anything like a reasonable hope of the perfectibility of mankind; a hope that what has often been wrought in individuals, may also in the fulness of time be wrought by the same power in the race. u.

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I met this morning with the following sentences. "An upholsterer nowadays makes much handsomer furniture than they made three hundred years ago. The march of mind is discernible in everything. Shall religion then be the only thing that continues wholly unimproved?"

What? Does the march of mind improve the oaks of the forest? does it make them follow its banners to Dunsinane, or dance, as Orpheus did of old? does it improve the mountains? does it improve the waves of the sea? does it improve the sun? The passage is silly enough: I merely quote it, because it gives plain utterance to a delusion, which is floating about in thousands, I might say in millions of minds. Some things we improve; and so we assume that we can improve, and are to improve all things; as though it followed that, because we can mend a pen, we can with the same ease mend an eagle's wing; as though,



because nibbling the pen strengthens it, paring the eagle's wings must strengthen them also. People forget what things are progressive, and what improgressive. Of those too which are progressive, they forget that some are borne along according to laws independent of human controll, while others may be shoved or driven on by the industry and intelligence of man. Nay, even among those things with which the will and wit of man might seem to have the power of dealing freely, are there none which have not kept on advancing at full speed along with the march of mind? Where are the churches built in our days, which are so much grander and more beautiful than those of York and Salisbury, of Amiens and Cologne, as to warrant a presumption that they who can raise a worthier house for God, are also likely to know God, and to know how to worship him better?

In one point of view indeed we do improve both the oaks and the mountains, both the sea and even the sun; not in themselves absolutely, but in their relations to us. We make them minister more and more to our purposes; and we derive greater benefits from them, which increase with the increase of civilization. In this sense too may we, and ought we to improve religion; not in itself, but in its relations to us; so that it may do us more and more good, or, in other words, may exercise a greater and still greater power over

That is to say, we are to improve ourselves,

in the only way of doing so effectually : we are to increase the power of religion over us, by obeying it, by submitting our wills to it, by receiving it into our hearts with more entire devotion and love.

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U.

Every idea, when brought down into the region of the empirical understanding, and contemplated under the relations of time and space, involves a union of opposites, which are bound together and harmonized in it : or rather, being one and simple in its own primordial fulness, it splits, when it enters into the prismatic atmosphere of human nature. Thus too is it with Christianity, from whatever point of view we regard it. If we look at it historically, it is at once unchangeable and changeable, at once constant and progressive. Were it not unchangeable and constant, it could not be the manifestation of Him who is the same yesterday, today, and for ever. Were it not changeable and progressive, it would not be suited to him with whom today is never like yesterday, nor tomorrow like today. Therefore it is both at once ; one in its essence and changeless, as coming from God ; manifold and variable in its workings, as designed to pervade and hallow every phase and element of man's being, his thoughts, his words, his deeds, his imagination, his reason, his affections, his duties. For it is not an outward form : it is not merely a law, manifesting itself by its own light, cast like a sky

around man, and guiding him by its polar constellations : its light comes down to him, and dwells with him, and enters into him, and mingling with and strengthening his productive powers, issues forth again in blossoms and fruits. Accordingly, as those powers are various, so must the blossoms and fruits be that spring from them.

If we compare our religious writers, ascetical or doctrinal, with those of France or Germany, we can hardly fail to perceive that, in turning from one nation to another, we are opening a new vein of thought : so remarkably and characteristically do they differ. I am not referring to the errors, Romanist or rationalist, with which many of our continental neighbours are tainted : independently of these, each picks out certain portions of the truth, such as are most congenial to the temper of his own heart and mind. Nor is he wrong in doing so : for the aim of Christianity is not to stifle the germs of individual character, and to bring down all mankind to a dead level. On the contrary, it fosters and developes the central principle of individuality in every man, and frees it from the crushing burthen with which the lusts of the flesh and the vanities of life overlay it ; as we may observe from the very first in the strongly marked characters of Peter and James and John and Paul.

So too, if we compare the religious writers of the present day with those who lived a hundred

years ago,—or these with the great divines of the seventeenth century,—or these with the reformers,—or these with the schoolmen and the mystics of the middle ages,—or these with the Latin fathers, or with the Greek,—we must needs be struck by a number of peculiarities in the views and feelings of each age. The forms, the colouring, the vegetation change, as we pass from one zone of time to another: nor would it require a very nice discrimination to distinguish, on reading any theological work, to what age of Christianity it belongs. Doctrines are differently brought forward, differently mast: some become more prominent than they have hitherto been, while others fall into the background. New chains of logical connexion are drawn between them. New wants are felt; new thoughts and feelings arise; and these too need to be hallowed. The most powerful and living preachers and writers have ever been those, who, full of the spirit of their own age, have felt a calling and a yearning to bring that spirit into subjection, and to set it at one with the spirit of Christ.

In this manner Christianity also becomes subject to the law of change, to which Time and all its births bow down. In a certain sense too the change is a progress; that is to say, in extent. Christianity is ever conquering some new province of human nature, some fresh national variety of mankind, some hitherto untenanted unexplored region of thought or feeling. The star-led wisdom

of the East came to worship the Lord of Truth, as soon as he appeared upon earth : and already in Paul and John do we see how the reason of man is transfigured by the incarnation of the Eternal Word. At Alexandria it was attempted to shew what system of truths would arise from this union of the human reason with the divine : and ever since, from Origen down to Schleiermacher and Hegel and Schelling, the highest endeavour of the greatest philosophers has been to Christianize their philosophy ; although in doing so they have often been deluded into substituting a fiction of their own, some phantom of logical abstractions, or some idol of a deified Nature, for the living God of the Gospel. Errours of all kinds have indeed beguiled Philosophy by the way : yet the inmost desire of her soul has ever been to celebrate her atonement with Religion : and often, when she has gone astray after the lusts of the world, this has been in the bitterness of her heart, because the misjudging sentinels of Religion, instead of inviting and welcoming her and cheering her on, reviled her and drove her away. Hence too, in those ages when she has been too fast bound in scholastic chains, she has been wont to utter her plaint in the broken sighs of the mystics.

“ Throughout the history of the Church (says Neander, in the introduction to his great work), we see how Christianity is the leaven that is destined to pervade the whole lump of human nature.” The workings of this leaven he traces

out with admirable skill and beauty, and in a spirit combining knowledge with faith and love in a rare and exquisite union. Indeed the setting forth this twofold manifestation of Christianity, in its constancy and in its progressiveness, is the great business of its historian. For such a history precious hints are to be found in the Letters recently published on *the Kingdom of Christ*, one of the wisest and noblest works that our Church has produced since *the Ecclesiastical Polity*. Whereas the common run of Church-historians are wont to disregard one of the two elements; either caring solely for that which is permanent in Christianity, without regard to its progressiveness; or else degrading it into a mere human invention, which man is to mould and fashion according to the dictates of his own mind.

After all it must never be forgotten that an increase in extent is very different from an increase in intensity. Like every other power, Religion too, in widening her empire, may impair her sway. It has been seen too often, both in philosophy and elsewhere, that, when people have fancied that the world was becoming Christian, Christianity was in fact becoming worldly. u.

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The tendency of man, we have seen, is much rather to believe in the corruptibility, than in the perfectibility of his nature. The former is the idea embodied in almost every mythology. It is the idea to which Poetry is led by the contrast

between her visions and the realities of life. It is the idea prompted by man's consciousness of his own helplessness, of his own caducity and mortality, of his own sinfulness, and of his utter inability to contend against the powers of nature, against time, against death, and against sin. Perhaps too, as in looking back on the past we are fonder of dwelling, whether with thankfulness or regret, on the good than on the evil that has befallen us, so conversely in our anticipations of the future fear may be stronger than hope. At least it is so with persons of mature years: and only of late have the young usurpt the right of determining public opinion. Even in those ages when men had the best grounds for knowing that in sundry things they surpass their ancestors, they were still disposed of old to look rather at the qualities in which they conceived themselves to have degenerated; and they deemed that the accessions in wealth or knowledge were more than counterbalanced by the decay of the integrity, simplicity, and energy which adorned the *ἄνδρες Μαραθωνόμαχοι*. In this there may have been much exaggeration, and no little delusion: but at all events it is a unanimous protest lifted up from every quarter of the earth, by all nations and languages, against the notion of the perfectibility of mankind.

The opposite belief, that there is any point of view from which mankind can be regarded as progressive, so that the regular advances already

made may warrant a hope that afterages will go on advancing in the same direction, seems to have been originally excited by the progress of science, and to have been confined thereto. Perhaps it may have been by the Romans,—on whom such a vast influx of knowledge poured in, as if to make amends for the downfall of everything else, in the latter ages of the republic, and the earlier of the empire,—that such a notion was first distinctly entertained. Thucydides was indeed well aware that Greece had been increasing for centuries in power and wealth and civilization ; and he strongly urges that the events of his own time are superior in importance to any former ones. More than once too he explicitly asserts the law, which is tacitly and practically recognized by all men, that, according to the constitution of human nature, we may count that the future will resemble the past. But the calamities of which he was a witness, seemed rather to forebode the destruction of Greece, than its attaining to any higher eminence ; and the Greek mind had not learnt to digest the thought that barbarians could become civilized. It was not till the age of Polybius that this confession was extorted by the spreading power of Rome. Nor was it possible for the Greeks to conceive, how the various elements of their nationality, which were so beautiful in their distinctness, would be fused together, like the Corinthian brass in the legend, by their destroyers, to become the material of a bulkier and massier,



though less graceful and finely-proportioned state. Their philosophers speculated about the origin and growth of civil society, the primary institution of governments, and the natural order in which one form passes into another: but they too saw nothing in the world before their eyes, to breed hope with regard to the future; and Plato avows that, through the frailty of man, even his perfect commonwealth must contain the seeds of its own dissolution.

The theory of a cycle in which the various forms of government succeed one another, is adopted by Polybius; who feels such confidence in it as to declare (vi. 9), that by its help a man, judging dispassionately, may with tolerable certainty prognosticate what fortunes and changes await any existing constitution. He goes no further however than to lay down (vi. 51), that in the life of a state, as in that of an individual, there is a natural order of growth, maturity, and decay. Men were still very far from the idea that, while particular states and empires rise and fall, the race is slowly but steadily advancing along its predestined course. Indeed near two thousand years were to pass away, before this idea could be contemplated in its proper light. It was necessary that the human race should be distinctly regarded as a unit, as one great family scattered over the world. It was necessary that the belief in particular national gods should be superseded by the faith in the one true God,

the Father of heaven and earth. It was necessary that we should be enabled to take a wide, discriminating, catholic survey of all the nations that have ever risen above the historical horizon; and that we should have learnt not to look upon any of them as wholly outcast from the scheme of God's providence; that we should be convinced how each in its station has had a part to act, a destiny to fulfill.

Even science as yet could hardly be said to exhibit a growing body of determinate results: nor was there anything like a regular progress in it anterior to the Alexandrian school. Among the Roman men of letters, on the other hand, we find the progressiveness of science asserted as a law. *Ne quis desperet saecula proficere semper*, says Pliny (ii. 18). The same assurance is declared by Seneca in the well-known conclusion of his *Natural Questions*. *Veniet tempus, quo ista quae nunc latent, in lucem dies extrahat, et longioris aevi diligentia.*—*Veniet tempus, quo posteri nostri tam aperta nos nescisse mirentur.*—*Multa saeculis tunc futuris cum memoria nostri exoleverit, reservantur.*—*Non semel quaedam sacra traduntur: Eleusis servat quod ostendat revertentibus. Rerum natura, sacra sua non simul tradit. Initiatos nos credimus: in vestibulo ejus haeremus.* These sentences, even after deducting what must always be deducted on account of the panting and puffing of Seneca's shortbreathed brokenwinded style, still shew a confidence of the

increase of knowledge, which was hardly to be found in earlier times. It is worth noting that this confidence, both in him and in Pliny, is inspired by the discoveries in astronomy; which, Whewell remarks (*Hist. of the Ind. Sci.* i. 90), was "the only progressive science produced by the ancient world." With regard to maritime discovery a like confidence is express in those lines of the chorus in the *Medea* :

Venient annis saecula seris,  
 Quibus Oceanus vincula rerum  
 Laxet, et ingens pateat tellus ;  
 Tethysque novos detegat orbes ;  
 Nec sit terris ultima Thule :

lines evidently belonging to a later age than that of Ovid, to whom the *Medea* has without sufficient warrant been ascribed. It must have afforded some consolation to those who lived when the old world was sinking so fast into its grave, and when its heart and soul and mind all bore tokens of the deadly plague that was consuming it, to see even this brighter gleam in the distance. *Even this*, I say: for the prospect of the progress of science was not connected with that of any general improvement of mankind. On the contrary Seneca combines it in strange contrast with the increase of every corruption. *Tarde magna proveniunt. Id quod urum toto agimus animo, nondum perfecimus, ut pessimi essemus. Adhuc in processu vitia sunt.* He was not so intoxicated with the fruit of the tree of knowledge, as to fancy,

like the sophists of later times, that it was the fruit of the tree of life. On the contrary, he pronounces that the earth will be overflowed by another deluge, and that every living creature will be swallowed up; and that then, on the retreat of the waters, every animal will be produced anew, *dabiturque terris homo inscius scelerum. Sed illis quoque innocentia non durabit, nisi dum novi sunt. Cito nequitia subrepat: virtus difficilis inventu est, rectorem ducemque desiderat. Etiam sine magistro vitia discuntur: (Nat. Quaest. iii. 30).*

Nor could the perfectibility of mankind gain a place among the dreams of the middle ages. The recollections of the ancient world had not so entirely past away; the fragments of its wreck were too apparent: men could not but be aware that they were treading among the ruins of a much more splendid state of civilization. It is true, human nature was not at a standstill during that millenary. A new era was preparing. Mighty births were teeming in the womb; but they were as yet unseen. Men were laying the foundations of a grander and loftier edifice: but this is a work which goes on underground, which makes no show; and the labourers themselves little knew what they were doing. Even in respect of that which raised them above former ages, their purer faith, while the spirit of that faith casts down every proud thought, and stifles every vain boast, they were perpetually looking back, with shame and sorrow for their own falling off, to the holiness

and zeal of the primitive Christians. Indeed, as by our bodily constitution pain, however local, pierces through the whole frame, and almost disables us for receiving any pleasurable sensations through our other members, thereby warning us to seek for an immediate remedy ; so have we a moral instinct, which renders us acutely sensitive to the evils of the present time, far more than to those of the past ; thus rousing us to strive against that which is our only rightful foe. Our imagination, on the other hand, recalling and enhancing the good of the past, shews us that there is something to strive after, something to regain. It shews us that men may be exempt from the evil which is galling us, seeing that they have been so. Moreover, that which survives of the past is chiefly the good, evil from its nature being akin to death ; and this good is in divers ways brought continually before us, in all that is precious of the inheritance bequeathed to us by our ancestors. Every son, with the heart of a son, is thankful for what his father has done for him and left to him : nor will any but an unnatural one uncover his father's nakedness, even for his own eyes to look upon it. So far indeed were men in the middle ages from deeming themselves better than their forefathers, or expecting anything like a progressive improvement, an opinion often got abroad that the last days were at hand, and that the universal unprecedented corruption was a sign and prelude of their approach.

The great discoveries of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, which opened one world after another to men's eyes, and taught them at length to know the nature and compass of the earth and of the heavens, might indeed have awakened presumptuous thoughts. But Luther at the same time threw open the Bible to them. He opened their eyes to look into the moral and the spiritual world, and to see more clearly than before, how the whole head was sick, and the whole heart faint. The revival of letters too, while it opened the ancient world to them, almost compelled them to acknowledge that in intellectual culture they were mere barbarians in comparison with the Greeks and Romans: and for a long time men's judgements were spellbound, as Dante's was by Virgil, so that they veiled their heads, as before their masters, even when their genius was mounting above them. Hence the belief that mankind had degenerated became so prevalent, that Hakewill, in the first half of the seventeenth century, deemed it necessary to establish by a long and elaborate induction that it was without any substantial ground.

As he wrote early in Charles the First's reign, before the close of the most powerful and brilliant age in the history of the human mind, one might have thought he would have found no difficulty in convincing the contemporaries of Shakspeare and Bacon, that men's wits had not shrunk or weakened. But a genial age, like a genial individual,

is unconscious of its own excellence. For the element and lifeblood of genius is admiration and love. This is the source and spring of its power, its magic, beautifying wand: and it finds so much to admire and love in the various worlds which compass it around, it cannot narrow its thoughts or shrivel up its feelings to a paralytic worship of itself. Hakewill begins his *Apology* with declaring, that "the opinion of the world's decay is so generally received, not only among the vulgar, but by the learned, both divines and others, that its very commonness makes it current with many, without any further examination." In his preface he speaks of himself as "walking in an untrodden path, where he cannot trace the prints of any footsteps that have gone before him;" and, to excuse the length of his book, he pleads his having "to grapple with such a giant-like monster." Nor does even he venture beyond denying the decay of mankind. He is far from asserting that there is any improvement; only that there is "a vicissitude, an alternation and revolution" (p. 332), that, "what is lost to one part, is gained to another, and what is lost at one time, is recovered at another; and so the balance, by the divine providence overruling all, is kept upright." "As the heavens remain unchangeable, (he says in his preface,) so doth the Church triumphant in heaven: and as all things under the cope of heaven vary and change, so doth the militant here on earth. It hath its times and

turns, sometimes flowing, and again ebbing with the sea,—sometimes waxing, and again waning with the moon; which great light, it seems, the Almighty therefore set the lowest in the heavens, and nearest the earth, that it might daily put us in mind of the constancy of the one, and the inconstancy of the other; herself in some sort partaking of both, though in a different manner,—of the one in her substance, of the other in the copy of her visage.” He also acknowledges the important truth, that, if there be any deterioration, it has a moral cause. But the conception of a melioration, of an advance, seems never to have entered his head.

It is sometimes worth while to shew how recent is the origin of opinions, which are now regarded as incontestable and almost self-evident truths. The writer of a letter published by Coleridge in *the Friend* says (Vol. iii. p. 13): “The faith in the perpetual progression of human nature toward perfection—will, in some shape, always be the creed of virtue.” Wordsworth too, in the beautiful answer in which he prunes off some of the excrescences of this notion, still gives his sanction to the general assertion: “Let us allow and believe that there is a progress in the species toward unattainable perfection; or, whether this be so or not, that it is a necessity of a good and greatly gifted nature to believe it.” A necessity it is indeed for a good and highly gifted nature to believe that something may be done for the



bettering of mankind, and for the removal of the evils weighing upon them. Else enterprise would flag and faint ; which is never vigorous and strenuous, unless it breathe the mountain-air of hope. It must have something to aim at, some prize to press forward to. But when we look on the state of the world around us, there is so much to depress and breed despondence,—so much of the good of former times has past away, so much fresh evil has rusht in,—that no thoughtful man will hastily pronounce his own age to be on the whole better than foregoing ones. Rather, as almost every example shews, from meditating on the evils he has to contend against,—on their number, their diffusion, their tenacity, and their power,—will he incline to deem it worse. And so far is the perfectibility of man from forming an essential article of his creed, that I doubt whether such a notion was ever entertained, as a thing to be realized here on earth, till about the middle of the last century.

Even Bacon, the great prophet of science, who among all the sons of men seems to have lived the most in the future, who acknowledged that his words required an age, *saeculum forte integrum ad probandum, complura autem saecula ad perficiendum*, and who was so imprest with this belief, that in his will he left “his name and memory to forein nations and to the next ages,”—even he, in his anticipations of the increase of knowledge, which was to ensue upon

the adoption of his new method, hardly goes beyond the declaration in the book of Daniel; that *many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increast*. Let me quote the noble passage in which, just before the close of his *Advancement of Learning*, he gives utterance to his hopes. "Being now at some pause, looking back into that I have past through, this writing seemeth to me, as far as a man can judge of his own work, not much better than that noise or sound which musicians make while they are tuning their instruments; which is nothing pleasant to hear, yet is a cause why the music is sweeter afterward: so have I been content to tune the instruments of the muses, that they may play who have better hands. And surely, when I set before me the condition of these times, in which Learning hath made her third visitation or circuit, in all the qualities thereof,—as the excellency and vivacity of the wits of this age; the noble helps and lights which we have by the travails of ancient writers; the art of printing, which communicateth books to men of all fortunes; the openness of the world by navigation, which hath disclosed multitudes of experiments and a mass of natural history; the leisure wherewith these times abound, not employing men so generally in civil business, as the states of Greece did in respect of their popularity, and the state of Rome in respect of the greatness of her monarchy; the present disposition of these times to peace; and the

inseparable propriety of time, which is ever more and more to disclose truth;—I cannot but be raised to this persuasion, that this third period of time will far surpass that of the Grecian and Roman learning." And in the *Novum Organum* (i. cxxix.), where he enumerates the benefits likely to accrue to mankind from the increase of knowledge, he wisely adds, with regard to its moral influence: "Si quis depravationem scientiarum ad malitiam et luxuriam et similia objecerit, id neminem moveat. Illud enim de omnibus mundanis bonis dici potest, ingenio, fortitudine, viribus, forma, divitiis, luce ipsa, et reliquis. Recuperet modo genus humanum jus suum in naturam, quod ei ex dotatione divina competit; et detur ei copia: usum vero recta ratio et sana religio gubernabit."

Thus far all is sound and sure. Bacon's prophecies of the advance of science have been fulfilled far beyond what even he could have anticipated. For knowledge partakes of infinity: it widens with our capacities: the higher we mount in it, the vaster and more magnificent are the prospects it stretches out before us. Nor are we in these days, as men are ever apt to imagine of their own times, approaching to the end of them: nor shall we be nearer the end a thousand years hence than we are now. The family of Science has multiplied: new sciences, hitherto unnamed, unthought of, have arisen. The seed which Bacon sowed sprang up, and grew to be a mighty tree; and the

thoughts of thousands of men came and lodged in its branches: and those branches spread "so broad and long, that in the ground The bended twigs took root, and daughters grew About the mother tree, a pillared shade High overarcht . . . and echoing walks between." . . . walks where Poetry may wander, and wreath her blossoms around the massy stems, and where Religion may hymn the praises of that Wisdom, of which Science erects the hundred-aisled temple.

But Bacon likewise saw and acknowledged that Science of itself could not perfect mankind, and that right reason and pure religion were wanting to prevent its breeding evil. Although he had crost the stormbeaten Atlantic, over which men had for ages been sailing to and fro almost progressively, and though in the confidence of his prophetic intuition he gave the name of Good Hope to the headland he had reacht, yet, when he cast his eyes on the boundless expanse of waters beyond, he did not venture, like Magellan, to call it the Pacific. Once indeed a voice was heard to announce the rising of peace on earth: but that peace man marred: the bringer of it he slew: and, as if to shew how vain such a dream is, Magellan also was slain soon after he lancht out upon the sea, which in the magnanimous enthusiasm of his joy he named the Pacific. Calm too as the Pacific appeared at first, it was soon found to have no exemption from the tempests of earth, which have been raging over it ever

since with no less fury than they displayed on the Atlantic before. If Bacon's hopes were too sanguine in any respect, it was in trusting that reason and religion would guide and direct science. He did not sufficiently foresee how the old idolatries would revive,—how men would still worship the creature, under the form of abstractions and laws, instead of the living lawgiving Creator.

Every age of the world has had its peculiar phase of this idolatry, its peculiar form and aspect, under which it has conceived that the powers of earth would effect what can only be effected by the powers of heaven. Every age has its peculiar interests and excellencies, which it tries to render paramount and absolute. The delusion of the last century has been, that science will lead mankind to perfection. In looking at the history of science, it must strike every eye that, while the growth of poetry and philosophy is organic and individual, the increase of science is rather mechanical and cumulative. Every poet, every philosopher must begin from the beginning. Whatever he brings forth must spring out of the depths of his own nature, must have a living root in his heart. Pindar did not start where Homer left off, and engage in improving upon him: the very attempt would have been a proof of feebleness. And what must be the madness of a man who would undertake to improve upon Shakespeare! As reasonably might one set out to tack a pair of leaders before the chariot of the sun.

The whole race of the giants would never pile an Ossa on this Olympus: their missiles would roll back on their heads from the feet of the gods that dwell there. Even Goethe and Schiller, when they meddled with Shakspeare, and would fain have mended him, have only proved, what Voltaire, and Dryden himself, had proved before, that "Within his circle none can walk but he." Nor, when Shakspeare's genius past away from the earth, did any one akin to him reign in his stead. Indeed, according to that law of alternation, which is so conspicuous in the whole history of literature, it mostly happens that a period of extraordinary fertility is followed by a period of dearth. After the seven plenteous years come seven barren years, which devour the produce of the plenteous ones, yet continue as barren and illfavoured as ever.

Nor may a philosopher, any more than a poet, be a mere link in a chain: he must be a staple firmly and deeply fixt in the adamantine walls of Truth. If he rightly deserves the name, his mind must be impregnated with some of the primordial ideas, of life and being, man and nature, fate and freedom, order and law, thought and will, power and God. He may have received them from others; but he must receive them as seeds: they must teem and germinate within him, and mingle with the essence of his spirit, and must shape themselves into a new original growth. He who merely takes a string of propositions from

former writers, and busies himself in drawing fresh inferences from them, may be a skilful logician or psychologist, but has no claim to the high title of a philosopher. For in this too does philosophy resemble poetry, that it is not a bare act of the intellect, but requires the energy of the whole man, of his moral nature and will and affections, no less than of his understanding. It is the ideal pole, to which poetry is the real antithesis; and it bears the same relation to science, as poetry does to history. Hence those dissensions among philosophers, which are so often held up as the great scandal of philosophy, and the like of which are hardly found in science. They may, no doubt, be carried on in a reprehensible temper; that, however, belongs to the individuals, not to philosophy: so far as they are merely diversities, they may and ought to exist harmoniously side by side, as different incarnations of Truth. A great philosopher will indeed find pupils, who will be content to be nothing more; who will work out and fill up his system, and follow it in its remoter applications; who will be satraps under him, and go forth under his command to push on his frontier. But if any among them have a philosophical genius of their own, they will set up after a while for themselves; as we see in the history of philosophy in the only two countries where it has flourished, Greece and Germany. They who have light in themselves will not revolve as satellites. They do not continue

the servants and agents of their master's mind, but, like the successors of Alexander, establish independent thrones, and found new empires in the regions of thought. Hence too the other great scandal of philosophy, its improgressiveness, may easily be accounted for. The essence of philosophy being, not an acquaintance with empirical results, but the possession of the seminal idea,—the possessing it, and the being possessed by it, in a spiritual union and identification,—it may easily happen that philosophers in early ages should be greater and wiser than in later ones; greater not merely subjectively, as being endowed with a mightier genius, but as having received a higher initiation into the mysteries of Truth, as having dwelt more familiarly with her, and gazed on her unveiled beauty, and laid their heads in her bosom, and caught more of the inspiration ever flowing from the eternal wellhead ἐπ' ἀκροτάτης κορυφῆς πολυπίδακος Ἰδῆς. In fact they have no slight advantage over their successors, in that there are fewer extraneous terrene influences to rise and disturb the serenity of their vision.

Science, on the other hand, is little subject to similar vicissitudes: at least it has not been so since the days of Bacon. Neither in science itself, nor in that lower class of the arts which arise out of its practical application, has any individual work an enduring ultimate value, unless from its execution: and this would be altogether independent of its scientific value, and would belong



of their ancestors, and cried exultingly, *We are awake! we are awake!* not from any consciousness of active energy and vision, but because they had ceased to dream.

In this manner a belief in the perfectibility of man got into vogue, more especially in France; although the fearful depravation of morals merely bespoke his corruptibility, and might rather have been thought to portend that he was degenerating into a brute. Rousseau indeed was seduced, partly by the fascination of a dazzling paradox, and partly by the nervous antipathies of his morbid genius, to maintain the deleteriousness of the arts and sciences, and that the only effect of civilization had been to debase man from the type of his aboriginal perfection. And this notion was not without speciousness, if the state of French society in his days was to be taken as exhibiting the necessary effects of civilization. Thus, as one extreme is ever sure to call forth the opposite, the deification of civilized man led to the setting up of an altar on mount Gerizim in honour of savage man; and the age reeled to and fro between them, passing from the bloody rites of the one to the lascivious rites of the other, till the two were mingled together, and murder and lust solemnized their unhallowed nuptials in the kennel of the Revolution.

Among the apostles of perfectibility, several tried to combine this twofold worship. They mixt up the idea of progressiveness, derived

from the condition of civilized man, with a vague phantom of perfection, placed by the imagination in a supposititious state of nature, a new-fangled golden age, anterior to all social institutions. Although every plausible argument for anticipating the future progressiveness of mankind must rest on the fact, that such a hope is justified on the whole by the lessons of the past, they maintained that everything had hitherto been vicious and corrupt, that man hitherto had only gone further and further astray, but that nevertheless, by a sudden turn to the right about, he would soon reach the islands of the blessed. Now a thoughtful survey of the past will indeed force us to acknowledge that the progress hitherto has not been uniform, nor always equally apparent. We must not overlook the numerous examples which history furnishes in proof that, according to the French proverb, *il faut reculer pour mieux sauter*. We are to recognize the necessity that the former things, beautiful and excellent as they may have been after their kind, should pass away, in order that the ground might be prepared for a more widely diffused and more spiritual culture. But unless we discern how, through all the revolutions of history, life has still been triumphing over death, good over evil, we have nothing to warrant an expectation that this will be so hereafter. Moreover, though a great and momentous truth is involved in the saying, that, *when need is highest, then aid is highest*, this

comfort belongs only to such as acknowledge that man's waywardness is ever crost and overruled by a higher power. Whereas those who were most sanguine about the future, spurned the notion of superhuman control; while they only found matter for loathing in the present or the past. To their minds "old things all were over-old;" and they purpost to begin altogether anew, and "to frame a world of other stuff."

Nor did this purpose lie idle. In the work of destruction too they prospered: not so in that of reconstruction. As the spirit of the age was wholly negative, as men could find nothing to love or revere in earth or in heaven, in time or in eternity, it was not to be wondered at that they set up their own understanding: on the throne of a degraded, godless, chance-ridden universe. But having no love or reverence, they wrought in the dark, and dasht their heads against the laws and sanctities, to which they would not bow. It may be regarded as one of those instances of irony so frequent in history, that the moment chosen by man to assert his perfectibility should have been the very moment when all the powers of evil were about to be let loose, and to run riot over the earth. Happiness was the idol; and lo! the idol burst; and the spectral form of Misery rose out of it, and stretcht out its gaunt hand over the heads of the nations; and millions of hearts shrank and were frozen by its touch. Liberty was the watchword, liberty and equality:

and an iron despotism strode from north to south, and from east to west ; and all men cowered at its approach, and croucht beneath its feet, and were trampled on, and found the equality they coveted in universal prostration. Peace was the promise ; and the fulfilment was more than twenty years of fierce desolating war.

The whirlblast came ; the desert sands rose up,  
And shaped themselves : from earth to heaven they stood,  
As though they were the pillars of a temple  
Built by Omnipotence in its own honour.  
But the blast pauses, and their shaping spirit  
Is fled : the mighty columns were but sand ;  
And lazy snakes trail o'er the level ruins.

Yet Condorcet, as is well known, even during the Reign of Terrour, when himself doomed to the guillotine, employed the time of his imprisonment in drawing up a record of his speculations on the perfectibility of mankind : and full of error as his views are, one cannot withhold all admiration from a dauntlessness which could thus persevere in hoping against hope.

Speculations of this sort are so remote from the practical common-sense and the narrowminded empiricism, which were the chief characteristics inherited by English philosophy from its master, Locke, that the doctrine of perfectibility hardly found any strenuous advocate amongst us, until it was taken up by Godwin. The good and pious saw that wealth and luxury had not come without their usual train of moral evils ; and they foreboded the judgements which those evils must

call down. Berkeley, for instance, in one of his letters, quotes the above-cited lines of Horace, as about to be verified in the increasing depravation of the English people. In his *Essay toward preventing the Ruin of Great Britain*, occasioned by the failure of the Southsea scheme, he says: "Little can be hoped, if we consider the corrupt degenerate age we live in. Our symptoms are so bad, that, notwithstanding all the care and vigilance of the legislature, it is to be feared the final period of our state approaches." And in his *Verses on the Prospect of planting Arts and Learning in America*, after speaking of the decay of Europe, he adds:

Westward the course of empire takes its way:  
The first four acts already past,  
A fifth shall close the drama with the day:  
Time's noblest offspring is the last.

Hartley too, who, in spite of his material fantasmagoria, ranks high among the few men of a finer and more genial intellect during that dreary period, repeatedly speaks of the world as hastening to its end, and as doomed to perish on account of its excessive corruption; and he enumerates six causes, "which seem more especially to threaten ruin and dissolution to the present states of Christendom." "Christendom (thus he closes his work) seems ready to assume the place and lot of the Jews, after they had rejected their Messiah, the Saviour of the world. Let no one deceive himself or others. The present circumstances of

the world are extraordinary and critical beyond what has ever yet happened. If we refuse to let Christ reign over us as our Redeemer and Saviour, we must be slain before his face as enemies, at his second coming." Hartley does indeed look forward to "the restoration of the Jews, and the universal establishment of Christianity, as the causes of great happiness, which will change the face of this world much for the better" (Prop. 85): but this is a change to be wrought by a superhuman power, though not without human means (Prop. 84), and so does not lie within the range of our present inquiry; any more than Henry More's beautiful visions, or those of others, concerning the millennium.

Hume, than whom few men have been more poorly endowed with the historical spirit, or less capable of understanding or sympathizing with any unseen form of human nature, lays down in his *Essay on the Rise and Progress of the Arts and Sciences*, "that, when the arts and sciences come to perfection in any state, from that moment they naturally, or rather necessarily decline, and seldom or never revive;" a proposition which implies a sheer confusion of thought, as though the course and term of the arts and sciences were the same, and which he tries to support by the feeblest and shallowest arguments. In his *Essay on Refinement in the Arts*, he declares that "such a transformation of mankind, as would endow them with every virtue, and free them from every vice,"

being impossible, "concerns not the magistrate, who very often can only cure one vice by another." Such is the paltry morality, the miserable self-abandonment, to which utilitarianism leads. Recognizing nothing as good or evil in itself, it will foster one vice, to counteract what it deems a more hurtful one. He too has what he calls an *Idea of a perfect Commonwealth*: but it deals merely with the form of the government, being drawn up with the purpose of avoiding the errors into which Plato and Sir Thomas More, he says, fell, in making an improvement in the moral character of the people an essential part of their Utopias. Yet what would be the worth of a perfect commonwealth without such an improvement? or what its stability? Hume's name still excites so much terror, that it might be well if some able thinker and reasoner were to collect a century of blunders from his *Essays*: nor would it be difficult to do so, even without touching upon those which refer to questions of taste.

The belief in perfectibility would indeed have chimed in with many of the prevailing opinions on other subjects; with that, for instance, which stript the idea of God of his moral attributes, or resolved them into partial expressions of infinite benevolence; as well as with the corresponding opinion which regards evil as a mere defect, and entirely discards the sinfulness of sin. For, were nothing but an accident in our nature, removable by human means, it would argue a

cowardly distrust, not to believe that the mind, which is achieving such wonders in spreading man's empire, intellectual and material, over the outward world, will be able to devise some plan for subduing his inward foe. Yet the *Essay on Political Justice* does not seem to have produced much effect even at the time, in the way of conviction, except on a few youthful enthusiasts; though it added no little to the consternation among the retainers of the existing order of things. So deplorable however was the dearth of thought in England after the death of Burke, that, while Godwin's deeper fallacies were scarcely toucht by his opponents, they buoyed themselves up with the notion that he had been overthrown by the bulkiest instance of an *ignoratio elenchi* in the whole history of pseudo-philosophy,—the *Essay on Population*; a work which may have merits in other respects, but which, with reference to its primary object, the refutation of Condorcet and Godwin, is utterly impotent; all its arguments proceeding on a hypothesis totally different from that which it undertakes to impugn; as has been convincingly shewn by the great logician of our times in one of the *Notes from the Pocketbook of an English Opium-eater*. Indeed I hardly know whether the success of the *Essay on Population*, in dispelling the bright visions of a better state of things, be not a stronger argument against the perfectibility of man, than any contained in its pages; evincing as that success does such a



readiness to adopt any fallacy which flatters our prejudices, and bolsters up our imaginary interests.

It was in Germany that the idea of the progressiveness of mankind first revealed itself under a form more nearly approaching to the truth : which indeed might have been expected from the peculiar character of the nation. As the Germans surpass other nations in the power of discerning and understanding the spirits of other climes and times, they have been the first to perceive the true idea of the history of the world in its living fulness and richness : and here, as in other departments of knowledge, it is only by meditating on the laws observable in the past, that we can at all prognosticate the future.

What then is the true idea of the history of the world ? That question may now be answered briefly and plainly. For though it may take thousands of years to catch sight of an idea, yet, when it has once been clearly apprehended, it is wont to manifest itself by its own light. The generic distinction between man and the lower orders of animals, if we look at them historically,—the distinction out of which it arises that mankind alone have, properly speaking, a history, or become the agents and subjects in a series of diverse events,—is, that, while each individual animal in a manner fulfills the whole purpose of its existence, nothing of the sort can be predicated of any man that ever lived, but only of the race.

All the organs and faculties with which the animal is endowed, are called into action : all the tendencies discoverable in its nature are realized. Whereas every man has a number of dormant powers, a number of latent tendencies, the purpose of which can never be accomplished, except in the historical development of the race ; not in the race as existing at any one time, nor even in the whole of time past, but of the race as diffused through the whole period of time allotted to it, past, present, and to come. For thus much we can easily see, that there are many purposes of man's being, many tendencies in his nature, which have never yet been adequately fulfilled ; though we are quite unable to make out when that fulfilment will take place, or whither it will lead us. Moreover there is a universal law, of which we have a twofold assurance,—both from observation of all the works of nature, and from the wisdom of their author,—that no tendency has been implanted in any created thing, but sooner or later shall receive its accomplishment,—that God's purposes cannot be baffled, and that his word can never return to him empty. Hence it follows that all those tendencies in man's nature, which cannot be fulfilled immediately and contemporaneously, will be fulfilled gradually and successively in the course which mankind are to run. Accordingly the philosophical idea of the history of the world will be, that it is to exhibit the gradual unfolding of all the faculties of man's

intellectual and moral being,—those which he has in common with the brute animals, may be brought to perfection at once in him, as they are in them,—under every shade of circumstance, and in every variety of combination. This development in the species will proceed in the same order as it is wont to follow in those individuals whose souls have been drawn out into the light of consciousness. In its earlier stages the lower faculties will exercise a sway only disturbed now and then by the awakening of some moral instinct; and then by degrees will be superseded and brought into subjection by those of a higher order, coming forward first singly, and then conjointly; with a perpetual striving after the period when the whole man shall be called forth in perfect harmony and symmetry, according to Aristotle's definition of happiness, as *ψυχῆς ἐνέργεια κατ' ἀρετὴν τελείαν*. In a word, the purpose and end of the history of the world is to realize the idea of humanity. All the while too, as in the outward world, there is a mutual adaptation and correspondence between the course of the seasons, and the fruits they are to mature, so may we feel assured that, at every stage in the progress of history, such light and warmth will be vouchsafed to mankind from above, as they may be able to bear, and as their temporary needs may require.

I know not whether this idea was ever fully and explicitly enunciated by any writer anterior to Hegel. Indeed it presupposes a complete delineation

of the process by which the human mind itself is developed, such as is hardly to be found prior to his *Phenomenology*. Even by Hegel the historical process is regarded too much as a mere natural evolution, without due account of that fostering superintendence by which alone any real good is elicited. But the idea was already rising into the sphere of vision above half a century ago, and has been contemplated since then under a variety of particular aspects. Lessing, in one of his latest, most precious, and profoundest works,—a little treatise written in 1780, in which, after having with much labour purged himself from the naturalism and empiricism of his contemporaries, he reaches the very borders of a Christian philosophy,—speaks of revelation in its several stages as the gradual education of the human race. His prophecy, that the time of a new everlasting Gospel will come, may indeed startle those who are unacquainted with the deplorably effete decrepit state of the German church in his days: and had he not lived in an unbelieving age, he would have recognized, like Luther, that the Gospel which we have already, is at once everlasting and ever-new: else the spirit of his prophecy has been in great measure accomplished of late years, by the revival of religion, and the restoration of the old Gospel to much of its former power and majesty.

Herder, who treated the philosophy of history in his greatest work, and who made it the central

object of all his studies, yet, owing to the superficialness of his metaphysical knowledge, had but vague conceptions with regard to the progress of mankind. He had discerned no principle of unity determining its course and its end. His genius was much happier in seizing and describing the peculiarities of the various tribes of mankind, more especially in their less cultivated state, when almost entirely dependent on the circumstances of time and place : and such contemplations were better suited to the sentimental pantheism, into which the spirit of the eighteenth century recoiled from the formal monotheism it had inherited, which had found its main utterance in Rousseau, and with which Herder was much tainted, like many of the more genial minds of his age, and of those since.

Kant on the other hand, looking at history in its ordinary political sense, lays down, in a brief but masterly essay published in 1784, that the history of the human race, as a whole, may be regarded as the fulfilling of a secret purpose of nature to work out a perfect constitution ; this being the only condition in which all the tendencies implanted in man can be brought to perfection. In a later essay, in 1798, he remarks, with his characteristic subtilty, that, even if we assume the human race to have been constantly advancing or receding hitherto, this will not warrant a conclusion that it must necessarily continue to move in the same direction hereafter ; for that it

may have just reached a tropical point, and may be verging on its perihelion, or its aphelion, from which its course would be reversed. Hence he looks about for some fact, which may afford him a surer ground to argue on: and such a fact he finds in the enthusiastic sympathy excited throughout Europe by the outbreak of the French Revolution. This gives him a satisfactory assurance that the human race will not only be progressive hereafter, but has always been so hitherto. Perhaps a subtilty far inferior to Kant's might shew that this argument is not so very much sounder than every other which may be drawn from the history of the world. But his writings in his later years betray that the vigour of his faculties was declining: and one of the ways in which the great destroyer was at times pleased to display his power, was by building a house on the sand, after razing that on the rock. It was thus that, having swept away every antecedent system of ethics, he spun a new one out of his categorical imperative.

During the last fifty years, the idea of history as an organic whole, regulated by certain laws inherent in the constitution of man,—as a macrocosm analogous to the microcosm contained in every breast,—has been a favorite subject of speculation with the Germans. There are few among their eminent writers who have not occasionally thrown out thoughts on the subject: many have treated it, either partially or in its

totality, in distinct works : and it has been applied with more or less ability and intelligence to the history of religion, of philosophy, of poetry, and of the arts. In each it has been attempted to arrange and exhibit the various phenomena which are the subjects of history, not in a mere accidental sequence, after the practice of former times and of other countries, but as connected parts of a great whole,—to trace what may be called the metamorphoses of history, in their genesis and orderly succession. Of late too these theories have been imported into France, especially by the Saint-Simonians, but have mostly been frenchified during the journey, and turned into stiff coarse abstractions : added to which the national incapacity to contemplate an idea, makes the French always impatient to realize it under some determinate form ; instead of acknowledging that it can only be realized, when it realizes itself, and that it may do this under any form, if it be duly instilled into the mind as a living principle of thought.

From what has been said, we may perceive that the progress of mankind is not in a straight line, uniform and unbroken. On the contrary it is subject to manifold vicissitudes, interruptions, and delays ; ever advancing on the whole indeed, but often receding in one quarter, while it pushes forward in another ; and sometimes even retreating altogether for a while, that it may start afresh with greater and more

irresistible force. Wordsworth compares it to "the progress of a river, which both in its smaller reaches and larger turnings is frequently forced back toward its fountains by objects which cannot otherwise be eluded or overcome: yet with an accompanying impulse, that will ensure its advancement hereafter, it is either gaining strength every hour, or secretly conquering some difficulty, by a labour that contributes as effectually to further it in its course, as when it moves forward uninterrupted in a direct line." It is like the motion of the earth, which, beside its yearly course round the sun, has a daily revolution through successive periods of light and darkness. It is like the progress of the year, in which, after the blossoms of spring have dropt off, a long interval elapses before the autumnal fruits come forward conspicuously in their stead: and these too anon decay; and the foliage and herbage of one year mixes up with the mould for the enriching of another. It is like the life of an individual, in which every day adds something, and every day takes away something: but it by no means follows that what is added must be more valuable than what is taken away. u.

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When coupled with a right understanding of its object, the belief in the progressiveness of mankind has no tendency to foster presumption; which in its ordinary acceptation it is apt to do. For the narrowminded and



ignorant, being unable to project their thoughts beyond their own immediate circle, or to discriminate between what is really essential and valuable in any state of society, and what is accidental and derives its importance solely from habit, are prone to assume that no condition can well be endurable except their own, and to despise those who are unfortunate enough to differ from them, even in the cut of their coats, as so many Goths or Hottentots. In fact, this is the usual, as well as the original, meaning of the word *barbarian*: a barbarian is a person who does not talk as we talk, or dress as we dress, or eat as we eat; in short, who is so audacious as not to follow our practice in all the trivialities of manners. No doubt too there are people to whom it is quite incomprehensible, how all the world did not die of weariness and intellectual starvation in the days when there were no newspapers, or stagecoaches, or circulating libraries, or penny encyclopedias. Now such persons grow very proud and loud, when they fancy they have a philosophical proposition to back their pretensions: forthwith they enlist as drummers, to beat the march of mind. And beat it they do deafeningly, at every corner of a street, in an age of a superficial character, like the present, the advantages of which strike every eye, while they keep us from looking at anything beyond, — from observing the poisonous vermin that swarm amid the luxuriant rank vegetation,

the morass it grows out of, and the *malaria* it breeds.

It is true, this results in part from that instinctive power by which habit attaches us to whatever we are accustomed to ; thus, by a wise and beneficent ordinance, adapting our nature to the endless varieties of our condition and circumstances, and enabling us to find happiness wheresoever we may be placed. Here, as in so many other cases, it is by "overleaping itself, and falling on the other side," by passing out of its own positive region into that of negativeness, that a feeling, in itself sound and wholesome, becomes erroneous and mischievous. At the same time, in so doing it perverts and belies itself. For it is no way necessary that a fondness for any one object should so turn the current of our affections, as to draw them away from all others ; still less that it should sour them against others. On the contrary, love, when true and deep, opens and expands the heart, and fills it with universal goodwill. Whereas exclusiveness, of whatsoever kind, arises from the monopolizing spirit of selfishness. They who look contemptuously upon other things, in comparison with the chosen objects of their regard, do so not from any transcendent affection for those objects in themselves, but merely as the objects which they vouchsafe to honour ; and because they think it ministers to their glory to sip the cream of the whole earth, while the rest of mankind are fain to swallow the skim-milk. In such a temper of mind

there is no pure hearty satisfaction, no pure hearty delight even in the very objects thus extolled. If a person is really at ease, and thoroughly contented with his own state, he will be glad that his neighbours should feel a like contentment in theirs. Thus patriotism becomes the ground, and, indeed, is the only sure ground, of cosmopolitanism.

When we call to remembrance, however, that the course of time is markt, not by the rectilinear flight, but by the oscillations and pulsations of life,—that life does not flow in a straight conspicuous stream into its ocean-home, but sinks sooner or later into the subterraneous caverns of death,—that light does not keep on brightening into a more intense effulgence, but, in compassion to the infirmity of our organs, allows them to bathe ever and anon and seek refreshment in darkness,—that the moral year, like the natural, is not one continued spring and summer, but has its seasons of decay, during which new growths are preparing,—that the ways of Providence in this world, as crost and interrupted by the self-will of man, are not solely from good to better, but often, in a merciful condescension to our frailty, through evil to good,—we shall understand that a more advanced stage of civilization does not necessarily imply a better state of society, least of all in any one particular country; which, it is possible, may already have played out its part, and be doomed to fall, while others rise up in its stead. Indeed so far

is our superiority to our ancestors from being a self-evident notorious truth, the best of all proofs of our being superior to them would be our not thinking ourselves so.

Nay, even if the progress were uniform and continuous, what plea should we have for boasting? or how can we dare pride ourselves on a superiority to our ancestors, which we owe, not to our own exertions, but to theirs? how can we allow that superiority to awaken any feeling, except of the awful responsibility it imposes on us, and of reverent gratitude to those through whose labours and endurance we have been raised to our present elevation?

That an acknowledgement of the inferiority of our own times is no way inconsistent with the firmest assurance as to the general progressiveness of mankind, may be seen in the Lectures on the Character of the Age delivered by Fichte at Berlin in 1804. After laying down as the scheme of the history of our world, that mankind are to be trained to render that entire obedience to the law of reason as a freewill-offering, which in their primitive state they rendered unconsciously to the instinct of reason,—he divides the life of the human race into five distinct periods, and describes the present or third period, as “the epoch of man’s emancipation immediately from all binding authority, and mediately from all subjection to the rational instinct, and to reason altogether under every

shape,—the age of absolute indifference to all truth, and of utter unrestraint without any guidance,—the state of complete sinfulness.” At the same time he declared that this dismal transition-period,—for drawing the features of which he found abundant materials in the political, moral, and religious debasement of Germany at the close of the last and the beginning of the present century,—was verging on its close; and that mankind would shortly emerge from this lowest deep into the state of incipient justification. With all his perversities he was a noble heroic patriot, great as a philosopher, and still greater as a man: and one rejoices that he lived long enough to see what he would deem a sign that his hopes were about to be fulfilled, the enthusiastic spirit which animated regenerate Germany in 1813.

Thus, while a right understanding of the course and purpose of history must needs check our bragging of the advantages of our own age, neither will it allow us to murmur on account of its defects. What though the blossoms have dropt off? the fruit will not ripen without. What though the fruit have fallen or been consumed? so it must,—seeing that it cannot keep its freshness and flavour for ever,—in order that a new crop may be produced. Surely it is idle to repine that a tree does not stand through the year with a load of rotten apples. Precious as may have been the qualities or the institutions

which have past away, we shall recognize that their subsistence was incompatible with the new order of things ; that the locks which curl so gracefully round the downy glowing cheeks of the child, would ill become the man's furrowed brow, and must grow white in time ; but that then too they will have a beauty of their own, if the face express that sobriety and calmness and purity which accord with them ; and that every age in the life of a nation, as of an individual, has its advantages and its benefits, if we call them forth, and make a right use of them. For here too, unless we thwart or pervert the order of nature, a principle of compensation is ever working. It is in this thought that Tacitus finds consolation (*Annal.* iii. 55) : *Nisi forte rebus cunctis inest quidam velut orbis, ut quemadmodum temporum vices, ita morum vertantur : nec omnia apud priores meliora ; sed nostra quoque aetas multa laudis et artium imitanda posteris tulit.*

Above all, he who has observed how throughout history, while man is continually misusing good, and turning it into evil, the overruling sway of God's Providence out of evil is ever bringing forth good, will never be cast down, or tempted to despond, or to slacken his efforts, however untoward the immediate aspect of things may appear. For he will know that, whenever he is labouring in the cause of heaven, the powers of heaven are working with him ; that, though the good he is aiming at may not be attainable in the very form

he has in view, the ultimate result will assuredly be good ; that, were man diligent in fulfilling his part, this result would be immediate ; and that no one, who is thus diligent, shall lose his precious reward, of seeing that every good deed is a part of the life of the world. u.

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Another advantage attending the true idea of the progress of mankind is, that it alone enables us to estimate former ages justly. In looking back on the past, we are apt to fall into one of two errors. One class of historians treat the several moments of history as distinct insulated wholes, existing solely by themselves and for themselves, apart from all connexion with the general destinies of mankind. Another class regard them as so many steps in the ladder by which man had to mount to his present station. Now both these views are fallacious, the last the most so. For the former may coexist with a lively conception of individual reality, and contains nothing necessarily disparaging to the men of bygone generations ; though it will not aid us to discern their relative bearings and purposes. Whereas, in ascending a ladder, we think the steps were merely made to get up by, not to rest on ; we seldom pause to contemplate the varying prospects which spread out successively before each ; and by a scarcely avoidable delusion, everything above us being hidden in mist, we mistake our own landingplace for the summit,

and fancy the ladder was set up mainly for us, in order that we might climb it. Yet our post may easily be less commanding than several lower ones: some fresh obstacle may have come across us, to narrow our field of view: or our highth itself may render the objects indistinct. At all events, when we are looking down on them, we are unable to make out their proportions, and only perceive how they are connected with each other, not what they are in themselves. Indeed the other unphilosophical class of historians are also liable to a similar mistake. Not having a right insight into the necessary distinctions of ages and nations, they too measure others by their own standard, and so misunderstand and misjudge them.

In this, as in every idea, there is a union of opposites. Man, whether in his individual or in his corporate capacity, is neither to be regarded solely as the end of his own being, nor solely as a mean and instrument employed for the well-being of others,—nor again as partly one and partly the other,—but as both at once, and each wholly. Nay, so inseparable is this twofold office, and indivisible, that he cannot rightly fulfill either, except by fulfilling the other. He has a positive and significant part to act in the great drama of the world's life: and that part derives a double importance from not being designed to pass away like a dream, but to leave a lasting impression on the destinies and character of the race.



Moreover it is by diligently performing the part assigned to him, by topping it, as the phrase is, that he does his utmost to forward the general action of the drama. So that, to understand any past age, we should consider it in a twofold light; first gain the fullest and most definite conception of its peculiar features and character; and then contemplate it with reference to the place it holds in the history of the world. What was it? and what did it accomplish? These are the first questions: but others follow them. How came it to be what it was? how did it arise out of what went before? and what did it leave to that which came after? What phase of human nature did it express? what distinctive idea did it embody? what power did it realize? of what truths was it the exponent? and what portion of these its attributes has past away with it? what portion has been taken up and incorporated with the living spirit of the race?

Let me exemplify these remarks by the manner in which the history of philosophy has been treated. A number of writers, of whom Brucker may stand as the representative, have aimed at little else than giving a naked abstract or summary of the successive systems which have prevailed; translating the terminology into that of their own days; but with scarcely a conception that every system of philosophy, deserving the name, has an organic inward, as well as a logical and outward unity, and springs from a seminal

idea ; or that there is an orderly genesis by which one system issues from another. Yet, seeing that philosophy is the reflexion of the human mind upon itself, on its own nature and faculties, and on those supersensuous ideas and forms which it discovers within itself, the laws and mould of its being, the history of philosophy, it is plain, must be the history of the human mind, must follow the same regular progression, and go through the same transmigrations. Viewed in this light, the history of philosophy has a pervading unity, and a deep interest, and is intimately connected with the life of the race. But in its usual form it merely exhibits a series of logical diagrams, which seem to be no way concerned with the travails and throes of human nature,—which are nothing more than the images of Narcissus looking dotingly at himself ever and anon in the stream of Time,—and which “come like shadows, so depart,” until we are wearied by the dull ghastly procession, and cry, with Macbeth, *We'll see no more.*

Inadequate however and tantalizing as such a history is, it does at least furnish an outline of the forms under which philosophy has manifested itself: it shews us how multifarious those forms are, and supplies us with some of the materials for discerning the law of their succession. We perceive in it how the appetite of unity has ever been the great characteristic of the philosophical mind, and how that mind has ever been drawn by an

irrepressible instinct to bring all things to one, and to seek the central One in all. Hence these histories are of greater value, or at least come nearer to fulfilling the idea of a history, than such detached observations as Dugald Stewart has strung together for the sake of exhibiting a view of the progress of metaphysical philosophy. From the latter no one would be able to frame any conception of the systems enumerated, unless he were already acquainted with them. Indeed one should hardly make out, except from the objections urged every now and then against the love of system, that there is anything like a desire of unity in the philosophical spirit, any aim beyond certain more or less wide generalizations from the phenomena of the intellectual and material world. Instead of trying to give a faithful representation of former systems in their individuality, and their reciprocal connexion, pointing out the wants they were successively designed to satisfy, shewing how those wants arose, and how they could not but arise, and then tracing the evolution of each pervading idea, he has mostly contented himself with picking out a few incidental remarks, and these often no way pertaining to the general scheme of systematic thought, but such reflexions as are suggested to an acute and intelligent mind by observation of the world. The object which guides him in the selection of these remarks, is, to shew how the philosophers of former times caught glimpses of certain propositions, which he deems

to be the great truths of his own age: and he almost seems to have fancied that the human mind had been heaving and panting and toiling from the beginning, and ransacking the quarries of nature, and building up the mighty pyramid of thought, in order that Reid should lay on the headstone, and take his stand on the summit. Hereby a method, which is solely applicable to the history of science, is transferred to that of philosophy. Whereas the worth of a philosophical system is only to be appreciated in its unity and integrity, not from two or three casual remarks; which are a still more fallacious criterion, than detached passages are of the merit of a poem. For the power of drawing inferences from observation is totally distinct from that of discerning elementary ideas, and is often found without a particle of it; for instance in those who by way of eminence are termed men of practical minds. u.

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I have been trying to shew that the belief in the perfectibility, or even in the progressiveness of mankind, is a late growth in the world of thought, —to explain how and under what form it originated, and how much of error has been mixt up with it. Are we then to cast away the idea of perfectibility, as an idle, baseless, delusive, vain-glorious phantom? God forbid! And in truth he has forbidden it. He forbid it, when he set his own absolute perfection as the aim of our endeavour before us, by that blessed command,

—*Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.*

To deny the perfectibility of mankind is to charge these words with pompous inanity. They declare that the perfect renewal of God's image in man is not a presumptuous vision, not like a madman's attempt to clutch a handful of stars, but an object of righteous enterprise, which we may and ought to long for and to strive after. And as God's commands always imply the possibility of their fulfilment, and impart the power of fulfilling them to those who seek it, this, which was designed for all mankind, was accompanied by another, providing that all mankind should be called to aspire to that sublime perfection, should be taught by what steps they are to mount to it, and should receive help mighty enough to nerve their souls for the work. A body of men was instituted for the express purpose of teaching all nations to do all the things that Christ had commanded, and of baptizing them in the name of Him who alone can give man the power of subduing whatever there is of evil in his nature, and of maturing whatever there is of good.

*Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect.* This is the angel-trumpet which summons man to the warfare of duty. This, and nothing less than this, is the glorious prize set before him. Do our hearts swell with pride at the thought that this is what we ought to be, what we might be? A single glance at the state

of the world, at what we ourselves are, must quench that pride, and turn it into shame. U.

When quoting Dryden's epigram on Milton, some pages back, I called it stupid. Is this an indecorous expression to apply to anything that comes from so renowned a writer? I would not willingly fail in due respect to any man of genius, who has exercised his genius worthily: but I cannot feel much respect for the author of *Limberham*, who turned Milton's Eve into a vulgar coquette, and who defiled Shakspeare's *State of Innocence* by introducing the rottenhearted carnalities of Charles the Second's age into the *Tempest*. As to his epigram on Milton, it seems to me nearly impossible to pack a greater number of blundering thoughts into so small a space, than are crowded into its last four lines. Does the reader remember it?

Three poets, in three distant ages born,  
Greece, Italy, and England did adorn.  
The first in loftiness of thought surpast;  
The next in majesty; in both the last.  
The force of Nature could no further go:  
To make a third, she joined the former two.

As these lines are on the author of *Paradise Lost*, we know who must be the other poets spoken of: else we should hardly divine it from the descriptions given of them; which would fit any other writers nearly as well. For what feature of the Homeric poems is designated by "loftiness of thought?" what feature of Virgil by "majesty,"

— *majesty* contradistinguished from *loftiness of thought*? What is loftiness of thought in a poet, as existing without majesty? what majesty, without loftiness of thought? unless it be the majesty of Lewis the Fourteenth's full-bottomed wig, or of one of Dryden's own stage-kings. For, if there be not something incongruous in these two qualities, if they had already coexisted in Homer and Virgil, what is the prodigy of their union in Milton? How totally are the characters of the two poets mist in these words! They give no notion, or a most erroneous one, of Homer; and a very inadequate one of Virgil. Milton however is so highly favoured, that he unites both qualities. His "majesty" is not, like Virgil's, without "loftiness of thought;" nor his "loftiness of thought," like Homer's, without "majesty."

And the combination of these two elements, which are almost identical, exhausts the powers of Nature! This is one of the blustering pieces of bombast thrown out by those who neither know nor think what they are talking of. Eschylus, and Sophocles, and Pindar, and Aristophanes, and Dante, and Cervantes, and Shakspeare had lived, — every one of them having more in common with Homer, than Milton had: yet a man dares say, that the power of God has been worn out by creating Homer and Virgil! and that he could do nothing after, except by strapping them together.

Nor can there well be more complete ignorance

of the characteristics of genius. Secondary men, men of talents, may be mixt up, like an apothecary's prescription, of so many grains of one quality, and so many of another. But genius is one, individual, indivisible: like a star, it dwells alone. That which is essential in a man of genius, his central spirit, shews itself once, and passes away, never to return: and in few men is this more conspicuous than in Milton, in whom there is nothing Homeric, and hardly anything Virgilian. In sooth, one might as accurately describe the elephant, as being made up of the force of the lion, and the strength of the tiger.

A like inauspicious star has presided at the birth of many of the epigrams on great men. The authors of them, in their desire to say something very grand and striking, have been regardless of truth and propriety. What can be more turgid and extravagant than Pope's celebrated epitaph on Newton? in which he audaciously blots out all the knowledge of former ages, that he may give his hero a dark ground to stand out from; forgetting that in the intellectual world also the process of Nature is not by fits and starts, but gradually,—that the highest mountains do not spring up out of the plain, but are approacht by lower ranges,—and that no sun ever rises without a prelude twilight.

The best parallel to Pope's couplet,—for it is scarcely a parody,—is Nicolai's silly one on Mendelsohn:



*Es ist ein Gott: so sagte Moses schon :  
Doch den Beweis gab Moses Mendelsohn.*

Which may be Englisht without much disparagement by the following doggerel :

*There is a God, said Moses long ago :  
But Moses Mendelsohn first proved 'twas so.*

Far more ingenious than any of the preceding epigrams, — because it contains a thought, though a false one, — is Bembo's on Raphael :

*Ille hic est Raphael, tímuit quo sospite vinci  
Rerum magna parens, et moriente mori.*

Yet, neat and clever as this may be, a true imagination would revolt from charging Nature either with jealousy or with despondency. She may be endowed with the purer elementary feelings of humanity. She may be represented as sympathizing with man, as rejoicing with him or at him, as mourning with him or over him. But surely it is absurd that she, who is here called *rerum magna parens*, she who brings forth all the beauty and glory of mountains and vallies, of lakes and rivers and seas, of winter and spring and summer, — she who every evening showers thousands of stars over the sky, who calls the sun out of his eastern chamber, and welcomes him with bridal blushes, and leads him across the heavens, — she who has gone on for thousands of years pouring forth bright and graceful forms with inexhaustible variety and prodigality, — she who fills the immensity of space with beauty, and is ever renewing it through the immensity of time, — should be ruffled by a petty feeling of rivalry for

one of her children ; or should fear that the power which had seen countless generations and nations, and even worlds, rise and set, was about to expire, because one of her blossoms, although it was one of the loveliest, had dropt off from the tree of humanity.

In all these eulogies we find the same trick. The authors think they cannot sufficiently exalt the persons they want to praise, except by speaking derogatorily and slightingly of some other power. Nature is vilified, to magnify Milton and Raphael ; all the science from Archimedes down to Kepler and Galileo, for the sake of glorifying Newton. In the same style is Johnson's couplet on Shakspeare :

Existence saw him spurn her bounded reign ;  
And panting Time toiled after him in vain.

What the latter of these two monstrous lines was intended to mean, it is difficult to guess. For surely even Johnson's grandiloquence could hardly have taken this mode of expressing that Shakspeare violated the unities. The former line is one of the most infelicitous ever written. Not to speak of that uncouth abstraction, *Existence*, which is here turned into a person, and deckt out with eyes ; what distinguishes Shakspeare above all other poets, is, that he did not "spurn Existence's bounded reign." He was too wise to dream that it was bounded, too wise to fancy that he could overleap its bounds, too wise to be ambitious of taking a *salto mortale* into Chaos. His

excellence is that he never "spurns" anything. More than any other writer, he realizes his own conception of the philosophic life,—

Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,  
Sermons in stones, and good in everything.

People are fond of talking about the extravagances of genius, the exaggerations of the imagination; and when they meet with something very extravagant and exaggerated, they regard this as a proof that the writer's imagination was so violent and uncontrollable, it quite ran away with him. One might as well deem gouty legs symptomatic of strength and agility. Exaggerations mostly arise from feebleness and torpours of imagination. It is because we feel ourselves unable to vivify an object in its full calm reality, that we mouthe and sputter. When Caligula was making preparations for a triumph over an enemy he had never seen, *Galliarum procerissimum quemque, et, ut ipse dicebat, ἀξιοθριάμβευτον legit, ac seposuit ad pompam* (Suetonius, c. 47): and so it is with big words that authors have been wont to celebrate their factitious triumphs. Of the writers I have been citing none was remarkable for imaginative power: even Dryden was not so: in Johnson the active productive imagination was inert, the passive or receptive, sluggish and obtuse. His strength lay in his understanding, which was shrewd and vigorous, and at times sagacious. Yet no poet of the rankest most ill-regulated imagination ever wrote



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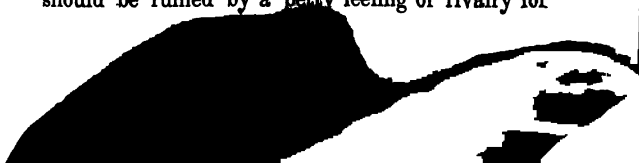
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In all these eulogies we find the same trick. The authors think they cannot sufficiently exalt the persons they want to praise, except by speaking derogatorily and slightly of some other power. Nature is vilified, to magnify Milton and Raphael ; all the science from Archimedes down to Kepler and Galileo, for the sake of glorifying Newton. In the same style is Johnson's couplet on Shakspeare :

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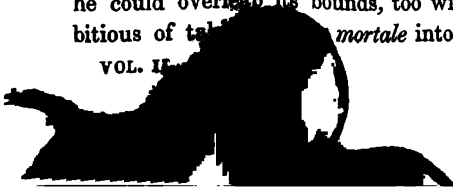


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substantial living flesh and blood as Shakspeare's: only their moral nature is simpler, and flows more uniformly and continuously, without such a whirl and eddy of thoughts and feelings. Tieck, who, in a note to his edition of the German Shakspeare, also observes that among all the plays *Troilus and Cressida* is unquestionably the most singular, calls it "a heroic comedy, a tragic parody, written with the set purpose of parodying the age of chivalry, the profound political wisdom which overleaps itself, the shows of love, and even misfortune." These words seem to express the real character of the play. But still the question recurs: how came Shakspeare thus to parody the Homeric heroes? how came he to conceive and represent them with all this ostentation and hollowness, ever trying to cheat and outwit each other, yet only successful in cheating and outwitting themselves? Now this, it seems to me, may not improbably be owing in great measure to the medium through which he saw them, and by which they were so much swelled out and distorted, that his exquisite taste might well take offense at such pompous phraseology in the mouth of simple warriors: while the combination of great political sagacity, and shrewdness and depth, more especially in general reflexions, with hollowness of heart, and weakness of purpose, was what he saw frequently exemplified among the statesmen of his own age. Though Agamemnon and his peers were certainly not meant as a satire on James

and his court, yet they have sundry features in common. u.

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A poet, to be popular, ought not to be too purely and intensely poetical. He should have plenty of ordinary poetry for the multitude of ordinary readers: and perhaps it may be well that he should have some poetry better than ordinary, lest the multitude should be daunted by finding themselves entirely at variance with the intelligent few. This however is by no means clear. He who calls to mind the popularity of *the Pleasures of Hope*, may remark that the artificial flowers in a milliner's window do not want any natural ones to set them off; and that a star looks very pale and dull, when squibs and rockets are shining it out of countenance. In truth this has just been the case with *Gertrude of Wyoming*, which has been quite thrown into the shade by its gaudier flimsier neighbour.

I have known several persons, to whom no poem of Wordsworth's gave so much pleasure as the *Lines written while sailing in a boat at evening*; which were composed, as he has told me, on the Cam, while he was at college. *O, if he had but gone on writing in that style!* many will say, *what a charming poet he would have been!* For these are among the very few verses of Wordsworth's, which any other person might have written; that is, bating the purity and delicacy of the language, and the sweetness of the versification,

The sentiment and the exercise of fancy are just raised so much above the temperature of common life, as to produce a pleasant glow : and there is nothing calling for any stretch of imagination or of thought ; nothing like what we so often find in his poems, when out of Nature's heart a voice " appears to issue, *startling The blank air.*"

In like manner I have been told that, among Landor's *Conversations*, the most general favorite is that between General Kleber and some French officers. If it be so, one may easily see why. Beautiful as some touches in it are, it is not so far removed, as most of its companions, from what other men have written and can write.

No doubt there is also another reason,—that this Conversation has something of a story connected with it. For in mere incidents all take an interest, through the universal fellowfeeling which binds man to man ; as is proved by the fondness for gossiping, from which so few are exempt. Above all is such an interest excited by everything connected, however remotely, with the two great powers which come across the path of life,—death, which terminates it,—and love, which, to the imagination even of the least imaginative, seems to carry it for a while out of the highway dust, into the midst of green fields and flowers. Hence it is that all tattlers delight in getting hold of anything akin to a love-story ; not merely from a fondness for scandal, but because the most powerful and pleasurable of human

feelings is in some measure awakened and excited thereby.

Nor is it at all requisite to the excitement of interest by incidents, that the persons they befall should have any depth of character or passion. On the contrary, such a surplusage often makes them less generally interesting. Leave out the thoughts and the characters in *Hamlet*, *Lear*, and *Macbeth*: as pantomimic melodramas they might perchance run against *Pizarro* and *the Forest of Bondy*. Hence the popularity of novels; the name of which implies some novel incident; and the interest of which mostly arises from the entangling and disentangling of a love-story. Indeed this is all that the bulk of novel-readers care about;—who loves whom? and by what difficulties their loves are crost? and how those difficulties are surmounted? and how the loveknot, after the tying and untying of sundry other knots, twists about at length into a marriageknot?

This too is perhaps one of the reasons why the heroes and heroines of novels have so little character. They are to be just such persons as the readers can wish and believe themselves to be, trickt out with all manner of insipid virtues, unencumbered by anything distinctive and individual. Then we may float along in a daydream, with a half-conscious persuasion that all the occurrences related are happening to ourselves. Hereby Poetry, instead of lifting us out of ourselves into an ideal world, brings down its world to us, and

peoples the real world with phantoms. These delusions would be dispersed by any powerful delineation of individual character. We cannot fancy ourselves Lear, or Macbeth, or Hamlet; although on deeper reflexion we perceive that we are heirs of a common nature.

In this sense it is very true, that, as one of our greatest modern writers once said, incident and interest are the bane of poetry. For the main subject matter of poetry being man,—the various modifications and combinations of human character and feelings,—the facts it treats of will be primarily actions, or what men do, exhibiting and fulfilling the inward impulses of their nature,—and secondarily events, which follow one another according to an apparent law, and which shew how the outward world runs parallel or counter to the characters, calling forth their dormant energies, unfolding them, shaping them, perfecting them. Whereas incidents are mere creatures of chance, unconnected, insulated, and interesting solely from themselves, from their strangeness, not from their moral influence. Such an interest being excited with far more ease, both by the writer, and in the reader, the love of incidents has commonly been among the symptoms of a declining age in poetry; as for instance in Euripides, compared with Eschylus and Sophocles,—in Fletcher, compared with Shakspeare.

And this is the interest which is injurious to poetry, the interest excited by strange incidents,

and by keeping curiosity on the stretch. Not that good poetry is to be uninteresting: but the sources of its interest lie deeper, in our inmost consciousness and primary sympathies. Hence it is permanent. While the interest awakened by curiosity fades away when the curiosity has once been gratified, true poetical interest, the interest excited by the throes and conflicts of human passion, is wont to increase as we become familiar with its object. Every time I read *King Edipus*, the interest seems to become more intense: the knowledge of the result does not prevent my sympathizing anew with the terrific struggle. So is it in *Othello*. Whereas that excited by the *Castle of Otranto*, or the *Mysteries of Udolpho*, is nearly extinct after the first reading. In truth a mystery is unworthy of the name, unless it becomes more mysterious when we have been initiated into it, than it was before. u.

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Man cannot live without a shadow, even in poetry. Poetical dreamers forget this. They try to represent perfect characters, characters which shall be quite transparent: and so their heroes have no flesh and blood, no nerves or muscles, nothing to touch our sympathy, nothing for our affections to cling to. u.

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People stare much more at a paper kite, than at a real one. u.

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Brilliant speakers and writers should remember that coach-wheels are better than Catherine wheels to travel on.

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Many are ambitious of saying grand things, that is, of being grandiloquent. Eloquence is speaking out..a quality few esteem, and fewer aim at.

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One's first business in writing is to say what one has to say.

Is it? Dear me! I never knew that. Yet I have written ever so many articles in the *Hypo-critical Review*, laying down the law how everybody ought to write, and scolding everybody for not writing accordingly. Surely too my articles must have been admirable: for somebody told me he admired them. v.

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The best training for style is speech; not monologues, or lectures *ex cathedra*, like those of the German professors, of whose uninterrupted didacticity their literature bears too many marks; but conversation, whence the French, and women generally, derive the graces of their style; dialectic discussion, by which Plato braced and polisht his; and the agonistic oratory of the bar, the senate, and the forum, which makes people speak home, popularly, and to the point, as we see in our own best writers, as well as in those of Greece and Rome. For when such a practice is national, its

influence extends to those who do not come into immediate contact with it. The pulpit too would be a like discipline, if they who mount it would oftener think as much of the persons they are preaching to, as of the preacher. υ.

An epithet is an addition : but an addition may easily be an incumbrance ; as even a dog finds out, when a kettle is tied to his tail. Stuff a man into a featherbed ; and he will not move so lightly or nimbly. The very instruments of flying weigh us down, if not rightly adjusted, if out of place, or overthick. Yet many writers cram their thoughts into what might not inappropriately be called a featherbed of words. They accumulate epithets, which weaken oftener than they strengthen ; throwing a haze over the objects, instead of bringing out their features more distinctly. For authors too, like all the rest of mankind, take their seats among Hesiod's *νήπιοι, οὐδὲ ἴσασιν ὄσφ πλέον ἤμιν παντός.*

As a general maxim, no epithet should be used, which does not express something not express in the context, nor so implied in it as to be immediately deducible. Above all, shun abusive epithets. Leave it to those who can wield nothing more powerful, to throw offensive words. Before the fire burns strongly, it smoulders and smokes : when mightiest and most consuming, it is also brightest and clearest. A modern historian of the Cesars would hardly bridle his tongue

for five lines together. In every page we should be called upon to abhor the *perfidious* Tiberius, the *ferocious* Caligula, the *bloody* Nero, the *cruel* Domitian, the *tyrant*, the *monster*, the *fiend*. Tacitus, although not feeble in indignation, either in feeling or expressing it, knew that no gentleman ever pelts eggshells, even at those who are set up in the pillory: nor would he have done so at him who was pilloried in St Helena.

If the narrative warrant a sentence of reprobation, the reader will not be slow in pronouncing it: by taking it out of his mouth you affront him. A great master and critic in style observes, that "Thucydides and Demosthenes lay it down as a rule, never to say what they have reason to suppose would occur to the auditor and reader, in consequence of anything said before; knowing that every one is more pleased, and more easily led by us, when we bring forward his thoughts indirectly and imperceptibly, than when we elbow them and outstrip them with our own:" (*Imagin. Convers.* i. 129). Perhaps, as is often the case in criticism, a practice resulting from an instinctive sense of beauty and fitness may here be spoken of as a rule, the subject of a conscious purpose: and when it becomes such, and is made a matter of elaborate study, the practice itself is apt to be carried too far, and to produce a zigzag style, instead of a smooth winding flow. For the old saying, that *ars est celare artem*, is not only applicable to works, but in a still more important sense to

authors ; whose nature will never be bettered by any art, until that art becomes nature. Still, so far as such a rule tended to make our language more temperate, it could hardly be otherwise than beneficial. This temperance too, like all temperance, would greatly foster strength. For we are ever disposed to sympathize with those who repress their passions ; we even spur them on ; while we pull in those who are run away with by theirs : and something like pity rises up toward the veriest criminal, when we see him meet with hard words, as well as hanging.

There is a difference however, as to the use of epithets, between poetry and prose. The former is allowed to dwell longer on that which is circumstantial and accessory. Ornaments may become a ball-dress, which would be unseasonable of a morning. The walk of Prose is a walk of business, along a road, with an end to reach, and without leisure to do more than take a glance at the prospect : Poetry's on the other hand is a walk of pleasure, among fields and groves, where she may often loiter and gaze her fill, and even stoop now and then to cull a flower. Yet ornamental epithets are not essential to poetry : should you fancy they are, read Sophocles, and read Dante. Or if you would see how the purest and noblest poetry may be painted and rouged out of its grandeur by them, compare Pope's translations of Homer with the original, or Tate and Brady's of the Psalms with the prose version. u.

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It has been urged in behalf of the octosyllabic metre, of which modern writers are so fond, that much of our heroic verse would be improved, if you were to leave out a couple of syllables in each line. Such an argument may not betoken much logical precision; seeing that idle words may find a way into lines of eight syllables, as well as into those of ten: nor is there any peculiar pliancy in the former, which should render them the one regimental dimension, exclusively fitted to express all manner of thoughts. Moreover such omissions must alter the character of a poem, the two metres being in totally different keys; wherefore a change in the metre of a poem should superinduce a proportionate change in its whole structure and composition. Sorry too must be the verses, which could benefit by such an amputation. In Chaucer, Spenser, Shakspeare, Milton, it would be like improving a hand by chopping off a finger. If you try the experiment on Pope however, especially on his translation, you will find that line after line is the better for being thus curtailed. For you will get rid of many of the epithets, with which he was wont to eke out his couplets; and which, as he seldom exerted his imagination to reproduce the conceptions presented by his original, were mostly selected for little else than their sound, and their convenience in filling up the vacant space.

There is indeed a tendency in our heroic couplet, as it is very unaptly called, to collect

idle words ; that is to say, according to the mode of constructing it which has prevailed since the middle of the seventeenth century. Gibbon, in some observations on Ovid's *Fasti*, remarks that, in the elegiac metre, the necessity that "the sense must always be included in a couplet, causes the introduction of many useless words merely for the sake of the measure." The same has naturally been the case in our verse, ever since it was laid down as a rule that there must be a pause at the end of every other line. u.

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Coleridge, in his *Biographia Literaria* (i. 20), suggests that our vicious poetic diction "has been kept up by, if it did not wholly arise from, the custom of writing Latin verses, and the great importance attacht to these exercises, in our public schools." In this remark, too much efficacy is ascribed to what at the utmost can only have been a subordinate and secondary cause. For the very same vices of style have prevailed in other countries, where there was no such practice to generate and foster them. Nor in England have they been confined to persons educated at our public schools, but have been general among those who have set themselves to write poetry, whether for the sake of distinction, or to while away idle hours, or to gratify a literary taste, without any strong natural bent. Indeed the one great source of what is vicious in literature is the want of truth, under all its forms : while the

main source of what is excellent, in style as well as in matter, is the pure love and desire of truth, whether as the object of the reason and understanding, or of the imagination. He who writes with any other aim than that of giving full utterance to the truth which is teeming within him,—be it with the wish of writing finely, of gaining fame, or of gaining money,—is sure to write ill. He who is ambitious of becoming a poet, when Nature never meant him to be so, is sure to deck himself out with counterfeit ornaments.

Hence it is that translations are often injurious to literature. They may indeed be highly beneficial, by promoting that commerce of thought, which is the great end of the intercourse among nations, and of which the lower mercantile commerce should be the symbol and the instrument. Very often however a translator goes through his work as a job: and even when he has entered upon it spontaneously, he will mostly grow weary after a while, and continue it merely as taskwork. Whether from natural inaptitude, or from exhausted interest, he makes no steady strenuous endeavour to realize the conceptions of his author, and to bring them out vividly and distinctly, even before his own mind. But he has put on harness, and must go on. So he writes vaguely and hazily, tries to make up for the feebleness and incorrectness of his outlines, by daubing the picture over with gaudy colours; and getting no distinct perception of his author's meaning, nor having any distinct

meaning of his own, he falls into a noxious habit of using words without meaning.

For the same reason will the practice of writing in a foreign language be mischievous, and to the same extent; so far namely as it leads us to use words without a distinct living meaning, and to have some other object paramount to that of saying what we have to say, in the plainest, most forcible manner. An author may indeed exercise himself not without profit in writing Latin; and as people learn to walk with more grace and ease, by learning to dance, he may return to his own language with his perceptions of beauty and fitness in style sharpened by the necessity of attending to the niceties of a foreign tongue, in which all composition must needs be the work of art. Our principal Latin poets have been among the best and most elegant English writers of their time,—Cowley, Addison, Sir William Jones, Cowper, Landor: and though Milton was over-ambitious of emulating powers and beauties scarcely compatible with the genius of our language, his scholarship led him to that learned mastery over it, in which he stands almost alone.

But when Latin verses are to be written as a prescribed task,—when, according to the custom of many schools, boys are prepared for this accomplishment by being set in the first instance to write what are professedly *nonsense verses*, as though the stringing long and short syllables together after a certain fashion had a positive value,



independent of the subject matter,—when they are trained for years to write compulsorily on a theme imposed by a master,—it is not easy to imagine any method better calculated to deaden every spark of genuine poetical feeling. In its stead boys of quickness acquire a fondness for mere diction: this is the object aimed at, the prize set before them. They ransack Virgil and Horace and Ovid for pretty expressions, and bind up as many as they can in a posy: so that a copy of some fifty lines will often be a cento of such phrases, and contain a greater number of ornamental epithets than a couple of books of the Eneid.

To exemplify this poetical ferrumination, as he calls it, Coleridge cites a line from a prize-poem,—*Lactea purpureos interstrepit unda lapillos*,—which, he says, is taken from a line of Politian's,—*Pura coloratos interstrepit unda lapillos*; adding that, if you look out *purus* in the *Gradus*, you find *lacteus* as its first synonym; and that *purpureus* is the first synonym for *coloratus*. They who know how little Coleridge is to be relied on for a mere matter of fact, will not be surprised to learn, that *lacteus* does not occur among the synonyms for *purus* in the *Gradus*, as indeed it scarcely could, nor *purpureus* among those for *coloratus*. It is worth noticing however, as illustrating the effects of such a process, that the two epithets substituted for the original ones are both untrue. The original line is a very pretty

one, even in rhythm superior to the copy: but the water, though *pura*, is not *lactea*; nor, if it were, could the pebbles be seen through it: and these pebbles are *colorati, of various colours*, not, or at least only a few of them, *purpurei*. u.

Most people seem to think the coat makes the gentleman; almost all fancy the diction makes the poet. This is one of the reasons why *Paradise Regained* has been so generally slighted. In like manner many readers are unable to discover that there is any poetry in *Samson Agonistes*; and very few have any notion that there is more, and of a higher kind, than in *Comus*. Johnson for instance, while he says, that "a work more truly poetical (than *Comus*) is rarely found; allusions, images, and descriptive epithets embellish almost every period with lavish decoration,"—as though these things were the essence of poetry,—complains in the *Rambler* (No 140), that it is difficult to display the excellencies of *Samson*, owing to its "having none of those descriptions, similies, or splendid sentences, with which other tragedies are so lavishly adorned." So that Johnson's taste was of that savage cast, which thinks that a woman's beauty consists in her being studded with jewels, if confluent, so much the better; that she can have no beauty at all, unless she has a necklace and frontlet and ear-rings; and that, if she had a nose-ring, and lip-rings, and cheek-rings, and chin-rings, she would be all the

more beautiful. Even allowing that jewelry may not be always hurtful to female beauty, especially where there is little or none for it to hurt, yet there is a masculine beauty, as well as a feminine; and the former at least does not need to be trickt out with tinsel. The oak has a beauty of its own, a beauty which would not be improved by being spangled over with blossoms. We may remark too that it is only about the horizon that the sky arrays itself in the gorgeous pageantry of sunset. The upper heavens remain pure, or at most are tinged with a slight blush.

The whole of Johnson's elaborate criticism on *Samson Agonistes* is a specimen of his manner of taking up a flower with the tongs, and then protesting that he cannot feel any softness in it,—of his giving it a stroke with his sledge-hammer, and then crying, *Look! where is its beauty?* "This is the tragedy (he has the audacity to say), which ignorance has admired, and bigotry applauded." u.

Perhaps it is when the Imagination flies the lowest, that we see the hues of her plumage. In Coleridge's *Tabletalk* (i. 160), it is stated that, having remarkt how the *Pilgrim's Progress* "is composed in the lowest style of English," he added: "if you were to polish it, you would destroy the reality of the vision: for works of imagination should be written in very plain language: the more purely imaginative they are, the

more necessary it is to be plain." I know no better illustration of this, than the exquisite simplicity of the tales in Tieck's *Phantasus*; the style of which produces a persuasion of their complete reality, as though the author were born and bred in fairy-land, talking of matters with which he was thoroughly familiar, so that the wonderful events related seem to be actually going on before our eyes. This was probably the reason why Coleridge, as he once said to me, considered Tieck to be the poet of the purest imagination, according to his own definition of the imagination, who had ever lived.

That the loftiest aspirations of the feelings find their appropriate utterance in a like plainness of speech, is proved by the Psalms: that it is equally fitted to express the deepest mysteries of thought, by those who have received the highest initiation into them, we see in the writings of St John. On the other hand fine diction is wont to bring the author into view. We perceive the conjuration going on, and the vapours rising; which subside when the form evoked comes forth into distinct vision.

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u.

The beauty of a pale face is no beauty to the vulgar eye.

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u.

Too much is seldom enough. Pumping after your bucket is full prevents its keeping so.

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u.

Do, and have done. The former is far the easiest. U.

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How many faithful sentences are written now? that is, sentences dictated by a pure love of truth, without any wish save that of expressing the truth fully and clearly,—sentences in which there is neither a spark of light too much, nor a shade of darkness. U.

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The great misfortune of the present age is; that one can't stand on one's feet, without calling to mind that one is not standing on one's head. U.

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The swan on still St Mary's Lake  
Floats double, swan and shadow.

A similar duplicity is perpetually found in modern poetry; though it is seldom characterized by a stillness like that of St Mary's Lake. Even in Wordsworth himself we too often see the reflexion, along with the object. Look for instance at those fine lines on the first aspect of the French Revolution:

Not favoured spots alone, but the whole earth  
The beauty wore of promise,—that which sets  
(To take an image which was felt no doubt  
Among the bowers of Paradise itself)  
The budding rose above the rose full-blown.

When reading these lines, I have always wished that the third and fourth were omitted; or rather that the whole passage were constructed anew.

For there is much beauty in the thought. There is an imaginative harmony between the budding rose and the time when the world was in the bud : although the rosebud was not yet invested with that secondary interest which it derives from contrast, that interest through which the aged feel the beauty of childhood far more deeply than children can ; and although the beauty of fulfilment, the beauty of the full-blown rose, is that which shines the most radiantly in the hopeful eyes of youth. Such as it is however, the thought is not duly woven into the context : we seem to be looking at the reverse side of the tapestry, with the rough ends of thread sticking out. It is brought in reflectively, rather than imaginatively. A parenthesis, where it interrupts the continuity of a single thought, unless there be a coincident interruption of feeling, is ill-suited to poetry. You will hardly improve your pearl by splitting it in two, and sticking a pebble between the halves. The very expression, *to take an image*, is prosaic. The imagination does not *take images*. It discerns the harmonies of things, the more latent as well as the more apparent : the truths which it wishes to utter, it sees written in manifold forms by the finger of God on the mystic scroll of the universe : and what it sees it speaks of, not taking, but receiving, not feigning that which is not, but representing that which is. Nor is it quite correct to say that *an image was felt*, least of all in Paradise. The inhabitants of Paradise did not feel

images, but realities : it is since our expulsion from Paradise, that we have been doomed to take up our home in a world of shadows. And though the beauty of promise may have been felt there, the imagination was not yet so enslaved by the understanding, as to depreciate one kind of beauty for the sake of exalting another.

But if Wordsworth at times has this blemish in common with his contemporaries, he has excellences peculiarly his own. If in his pages we see both swan and shadow, in them at least the waters are still ;

And through her depths St Mary's Lake

Is visibly delighted ;

For not a feature of the hills

Is in the mirror slighted.

v.

In the two editions of Wordsworth's poems published since the former one of this little book, the lines just objected to have been altered ; and the passage now stands thus :

Not favoured spots alone, but the whole earth,

The beauty wore of promise,—that which sets

(As at some moment might not be unfelt

Among the bowers of Paradise itself)

The budding rose above the rose full-blown.

By this change a part of the foregoing remarks has been obviated : still I have not thought it necessary to cancel them. For their justice, so far at least, is confirmed by the great poet's compliance with them : and of esthetical criticism that portion is the most beneficial practically, which discusses details with precision. General

views of literature, whether theoretical or historical, are valuable, as enlarging the mind, and giving it a clew to the labyrinth, which since the invention of printing has been becoming more and more complicated every year. To authors however they have mostly done harm, seducing them to write from abstract notions, or after the fashion of bygone ages, instead of from the promptings of their own genius, and of the living world around them; as has been exemplified above all by numberless abortions in the recent literature of that country where such speculations have had the greatest vogue. Minuter criticism on the other hand, which was the kind most cultivated by the ancients, and which contributed to the exquisite polish of their style, has few votaries in England, except Landor, whose style bears a like witness to its advantages. Hence, by a twofold inversion of the right order, that which ought to be ideal and genial, is in modern works often merely technical; while in the objective technical parts blind caprice disports itself.

Besides it is pleasant to find a great writer shewing deference to one of low degree; not bristling up and stiffening, as men are apt to do, when any one presumes to hint the possibility of their not being infallible; but listening patiently to objections, and ready to allow them their weight. Perhaps however Wordsworth may at times allow them even more than their due weight: and this may have been the origin of many of



the alterations, which readers familiar with the earlier editions of his poems have to regret in the later. Thus for instance it is "in deference to the opinion of a friend," that, in the beautiful ballad on the Blind Highland Boy, he has substituted the turtle-shell for the tub in which the boy actually did float down Loch Leven. Yet, though the description of the household tub in the original poem was perhaps needlessly minute, and too broad a defiance of the conventional decorums of poetry, the change seems to introduce an incongruous feature into the story, and to detract from its reality and probability, giving it the air of a fiction. It militates against the great original principle of Wordsworth's poetry; which was, to shew how the germs of poetical feeling and interest are not confined to certain privileged classes and conditions of society, but are spread through every region of life; and that, where the feeling is genuine and strong, it will invest what might otherwise be deemed mean with a moral dignity and beauty. Were the incident an invention, there might be some plea for deriding the poet, whose imagination dwelt among such homely utensils: but the fact having been such as it was, the alteration is too much after the fashion of those with which the French translators of Shakspeare have thought it became them to ennoble their original; too much as if one were to change Desdemona's handkerchief into a shawl. A jester would recommend that Peter Bell's ass should in like manner be metamorphosed

into a camel. Yet surely the vessel in which Diogenes lived, and Regulus died, and on which Wesley preacht, might be mentioned even in this treble-refined age, without exciting a hysterical nausea, or setting people's ears on edge. Else the poet, who has not been wont to shew much fear of his critics, might be content to throw it out as a tub for the whale.

Even in such matters the beginning of change is as when one letteth out water: none knows where it will stop. The description of the turtle-shell, which at first was in the same tone with the rest of the poem, was not held to be sufficiently ornate. Coleridge objected to it (*Biog. Lit.* ii. 136); very unreasonably, as it seems to me, considering that the ballad is professedly a fireside tale told to children, and that this its character was studiously preserved throughout. Indeed exquisite skill was shewn in the manner in which the story was carried into the higher regions of poetry, yet without ever deviating from the most childlike simplicity and familiarity of expression. Coleridge's objections however led the author to bring in five new lines, more after the manner of ordinary poetical diction; but which are out of keeping with the rest of the poem, and would be unintelligible to its supposed audience. When the turtle-shell was first introduced, they were told that sundry curiosities had been brought by mariners to the coast:

And one, the rarest, was a shell,  
 Which he, poor child, had studied well ;  
 The shell of a green turtle, thin  
 And hollow : you might sit therein ;  
 It was so wide and deep.

'Twas e'en the largest of its kind,  
 Large, thin, and light as birchtree-rind ;  
 So light a shell, that it would swim,  
 And gaily lift its fearless rim  
 Above the tossing waves.

These lines set the shell before the children's eyes,  
 place them in it, and give life and spirit to the story.  
 But now their childly brains are bewildered, by  
 hearing that, among the rarities from far countries,

The rarest was a turtle-shell ;  
 Which he, poor child, had studied well.  
 A shell of ample size, and light  
*As the pearly car of Amphitrite,*  
*That sportive dolphins draw.*

*And, as a coracle that braves*  
*On Vaga's breast the fretful waves,*  
 This shell upon the deep would swim,  
 And gaily lift its fearless brim  
 Above the tossing surge.

Alas ! we too often find those who have to  
 teach children, explaining *ignotum per ignotius* ;  
 and at times one is much puzzled to do otherwise.  
 But is this a thing desirable in itself? and can it  
 be a judicious improvement, to give up a clear,  
 simple, lively description, for the sake of a few  
 fine words, which leave the hearers in a mist ? u.

In the former volume I made some remarks on  
 the inexpediency of substituting any other word

for the first that comes into our head. The main reason for this is, that the word which comes first is likely to be the simplest, most natural expression of the thought. Where, from artificial habits of mind, this is not so, a less plain word may be made to give place to a plainer one with advantage. But there is a further consideration. The first word will often be connected with its neighbours by certain dim associations, by which, though they may never have been brought into distinct consciousness, it was in fact suggested in the secondsighted travail of writing. These associations are afterward lost thought of. In reading over the passage, it strikes us that some other word would look better in its place, would be more forcible, more precise, more elegant, more harmonious. Now there is always something tempting in a change, as in every exercise of power and will: it flatters us to display any kind of superiority, even over our own former selves: we are glad to believe that we are more intelligent than we were: and through the influence of these motives we readily assume that the change is an improvement, without considering whether the new word is really better, not merely in itself, but also relatively to the context. They who are nice in the use of words, and who take pains in correcting their writings, must often have found afterward that many of their corrections were for the worse; and I think it must have surprised them to observe how much further and more clearly

they saw during the fervour of composition, than afterward when they were looking over what they had written, and examining it critically and reflectively. Hence Wordsworth in his last editions has often restored the old readings, in passages which in some of the intervening ones he had been induced to alter. For instance, the beautiful little poem on the Nightingale and the Stockdove began originally,

O nightingale! thou surely art  
A creature of a *firy* heart.

This expression, as one might have expected, offended the prosaic mind of the Edinburgh Reviewer; and though the poet was not wont to hold Scotch criticism in much honour, he complied with it so far as to alter the second line, in the edition of 1815, into *A creature of ebullient heart*. The new epithet however, though not without beauty, does not introduce the following lines so appropriately, or bring out the contrast with the stockdove's song so strongly, as its predecessor; which accordingly in the recent editions has resumed its place.

That an author, when revising his works some years after, will be much more liable to such forgetfulness of the thoughts and feelings which prompted the original composition, is plain; above all, if he be a poet, whose works must needs have a number of unseen threads running through them, and holding them together. "In truly great poets (as Coleridge tells us he was taught by his

schoolmaster), there is a reason, not only for every word, but for the position of every word." Not that the poet is distinctly conscious of all these reasons: still less has he elaborately calculated and weighed them. But when he has acquired that genial mastery of language, which is one of the poet's most important attributes, his thoughts clothe themselves spontaneously in the fittest words. So too, when the mind is fully possessed with the idea of a work, it will carry out that idea in all its details, preserving a unity of tone and character throughout. In such a state it is scarcely less impossible for a true poet to say anything at variance with that idea, than it would be for an elm to bear apples, or for a rosebush to bring forth tulips. Whereas, when we look at the lines just cited, it seems clear that the author must have quite forgotten the scheme of his poem, and his purpose of telling it in language adapted to the understandings of children; or he could hardly have compared his turtle-shell to "the pearly car of Amphitrite," and "the coracle on Vaga's breast."

Besides a poet's opinions both with regard to style and to things, his views as to the principles and forms and purposes of poetry and of life, will naturally undergo material changes in the course of years; the more so the more genial and progressive his mind is. Hence, in looking back on a work of former days, he will often find much that will not be in unison with his present notions,

much that he would not say, at least just in the same manner, now. The truth is, the whole poem would be differently constructed, were he to write it now. And this, if it appear worth the while, is the best plan to adopt,—to rewrite the whole. Thus Shakspeare, if the first *King John* and *Lear* are youthful works of his, as there is strong reason for believing, rewrote them throughout in the maturity of his life, when, being possess with new ideas of the two works, he gave them a new and higher and mightier unity. Whereas a partial change will merely introduce that disharmony and jarring into the poem, which the author finds in his own mind. How would *Comus* have been frostbitten, had Milton set himself to correct it in his old age after the type of *Samson Agonistes*! The inferiority of the *Gerusalemme Conquistata* to the *Liberata* may indeed be attributable in great measure to the disease that was preying on Tasso's mind. But Schiller too, and even Goethe, when correcting their youthful works, have done little but enfeeble them. In learning and science subsequent researches may expand or rectify our views: but where a work has an ideal imaginative unity, that unity must not be infringed: and the very fact of an author's finding a repugnance between his present self and the offspring of his former self, proves that the idea of the latter has past away from him, and that he is no longer in a fit state to meddle with it. Even supposing, what must always be questionable, that the changes

in his own mind are all for the better, the old maxim, *Denique sit quod vis, simplex duntaxat et unum*, which even in morals is of such deep import, in esthetics is almost absolute.

Of incongruities introduced into a work by a departure from its original idea, there is an instance in Wordsworth's poem on a party of Gypsies,—a poem containing several majestic lines, but in which from the first the tone, as Coleridge observed, was elevated out of all proportion to the subject. Nor has this disproportionateness been lessened, but rather rendered more prominent, by the alteration it has undergone. The objections made in several quarters to the feeling expressed in this poem led the author to add four lines to it, protesting that he did not mean to speak in scorn of the gypsies; for that "they are what their birth And breeding suffers them to be,—Wild outcasts of humanity." Now this may be very true; and a new poem might have been written, giving utterance to this milder feeling. But it looks like a taint from the grandiloquence of the former lines, when "all that stirs in heaven and earth" is called to witness this protestation. Nor can one well see why a poem needing it should be retained and recognized. Above all, there is an abrupt sinking, when the gorgeous lines which go before are followed by this apology. If the gypsies are merely "what their birth And breeding suffers them to be, Wild outcasts of humanity," how can it be said that "wrong



and strife, By nature transient, are better than such torpid life?" And though the words, *by nature transient*, as applied to wrong and strife, express a deep and grand truth, alas! they are not so transient as the stationariness of the poor vagrants. Why again do the stars reprove such a life? Surely the lordly powers of nature have something wiser and juster to do, than to shame a knot of outcasts, who are "what their birth and breeding suffers them to be." If they needs must reprove, though they hardly look as if they could, they might find many things on earth less congenial and more offensive to their heavenly peace. It might afford a wholesome warning to reformers, to observe how, in a poem of less than thirty lines, the author himself by innovating has shaken the whole structure.

Another poem, which seems to me to have been sadly impaired by alteration, is one of the author's most beautiful works, his *Laodamia*. When it was originally published in 1815, the penultimate stanza, which follows the account of her death, ran thus:

Ah, judge her gently, who so deeply loved!  
Her, who in reason's spite, yet without crime,  
Was in a trance of passion thus removed;  
Delivered from the galling yoke of time,  
And these frail elements,—to gather flowers  
Of blissful quiet mid unfading bowers.

In the edition of 1827 this stanza was completely remoulded, and appeared in the following shape:

By no weak pity might the gods be moved.  
She who thus perisht, not without the crime  
Of lovers that in reason's spite have loved,  
Was doomed to wander in a grosser clime,  
Apart from happy ghosts,—that gather flowers  
Of blissful quiet mid unfading bowers.

Here one cannot help noticing the ingenuity with which the words are twisted about, to mean the very opposite of their original meaning. Yet even in such things it is better not to put new wine into old bottles. When a totally different idea is to be expressed, it is far likelier to be expressed appropriately in words of its own, than in a set of cast-off words, which had previously served to clothe some other form of thought. What chiefly strikes us however in the new stanza, is the arbitrariness with which the poet's judgement has veered round; so that, after having raised Laodamia to the joys of Elysium, he suddenly condemns her to endless sorrow. In the later editions indeed, the fourth line has been altered into "*Was doomed to wear out her appointed time;*" whereby she is elevated from the lower regions into purgatory, and allowed to look for a term to her woes. Yet still the sentence first past on her is completely reversed. The change too is one contrary to the whole order of things, both human and divine. They who have been condemned, may be pardoned: but they who have already been pardoned, must not be condemned. This is the course even of earthly judicatures. Man has an instinct in

the depths of his consciousness, which teaches him that the throne of Mercy is above that of Justice, that wrath is by nature transient, and that a sentence of condemnation may be revoked, but that the voice of Love is eternal, and that, when it has once gone forth, the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

On first perceiving this change, one naturally supposes that some new light must have broken upon the poet, or rather some new darkness; that he must at least have discovered some fresh marks of guilt in Laodamia, of which before he was not aware. But it is not so. Her words, her actions, her feelings are just what they were. The two or three slight alterations in the former part of the poem are merely verbal, and no way affect her character. If she was "without crime" before, she must be so still: if she is "not without crime" now, so must she have been from the first. The change is solely in the author's mind, without the slightest outward warrant for it: not a straw is thrown into the scale: his absolute nod alone makes it rise or sink. The only difference is, that he quotes the passage of Virgil, where the shade of Laodamia "is placed in a mournful region, among unhappy lovers." But surely Virgil's judgement in such a matter is not to overrule that of a Christian poet. Although the wisdom of the heathens was in certain respects more spiritual than that which has been current of late years, this is not one of the points in

which we should appeal to their decision. The eternal law, by which the happiness and misery of man are bound up with his moral and spiritual condition, was but dimly recognized in the popular traditions of the ancients. The inmates of Tartarus were rather the vanquished enemies of the gods; and being so regarded, the contemplation was not so painful to the moral sense: nor did it imply the same presumption in the judgement which cast them there. No one would now take Virgil as an authority for placing the whining souls of infants, wailing over the shortness of their lives, and those who had been condemned by unjust sentences, along with suicides, in the same mournful region. Nor would all who have perished through love, whether with or without crime, be consigned to the same doom; so as to make Phedra, Procris, Eriphyle, and Pasiphae, the companions of Evadne and Laodamia. The introduction of Evadne, so renowned for her heroic selfdevotement, proves that Virgil was guided in his selection more by the similarity of earthly destiny, than by any moral rule: and every one may perceive the poetical reason for enumerating the martyrs, as well as the guiltier victims, of passionate love; inasmuch as it is among these shades that Eneas is to find Dido.

My reason however for referring to the *Laodamia* was, that it is a remarkable instance how the imaginative ideal unity of a work may be violated by an alteration. It is said that

Windham, when he came to the end of a speech, often found himself so perplexed by his own subtilty, that he hardly knew which way he was going to give his vote. This is a good illustration of the fallaciousness of reasoning, and of the uncertainties which attend its practical application. Ever since the time of the sophists, Logic has been too ready to maintain either side of a question; and that, not merely in arguing with others, but even within our own bosoms. The workings of the Imagination however are far less capricious. When a poet comes to the end of his work, it does not rest with him to wind it up in this way or that.

What! may he not do as he pleases with the creatures of his own fancy?

A true poet would almost as soon think of doing as he pleased with his children. He feels that the creations of his imagination have an existence and a reality independent of his will; and he therefore regards them with reverence. The close of their lives, he feels, must be determined by what has gone before. The botchers of Shakspeare indeed have fancied they might remodel the catastrophes of his tragedies. One man would keep Hamlet alive,—another, Romeo,—a third, Lear. Yet even these changes are less violent, and more easily excusable, than the entire reversal of Laodamia's sentence. For in every earthly outward event there is something the ground of which we cannot discern, and which we therefore ascribe to

chance : and though in poetry the necessary concatenation of events ought to be more apparent, the unity of a character may still be preserved under every vicissitude of fortune. But the ultimate doom, which must needs be determined by the essence of the character itself, cannot be changed without a corresponding change in the character.

Horace has warned painters against combining a man's head with a horse's neck, or making a beautiful woman terminate in the tail of a fish. Yet in both these cases we know, from the representations of centaurs and mermaids, the combination is not incompatible with a certain kind of beauty. Indeed there is something pleasing and interesting in the sight of the animal nature rising into the human. The reverse, which we sometimes see in Egyptian idols, the human form topt by the animal,—a man for instance with a horse's head, or a woman with a fishes,—would on the other hand be purely painful and monstrous ; unless where, as in the case of Bottom, we look on the transformation as temporary, and as a piece of grotesque humour. But far more revolting would it be to see a living head upon a skeleton, or a death's head upon a living body. In moral combinations the contrast may not be so glaring : yet surely in them also is a harmony which ought not to be violated. The idea of the *Laodamia*, when we view it apart from the questionable

stanza, is clearly enunciated in those fine lines :

Love was given,  
 Encouraged, sanctioned, chiefly for this end,—  
 For this the passion to excess was driven,—  
 That self might be annulled, her bondage prove  
 The fetters of a dream, opposed to love.

But as the poem ends now, it directly falsifies this assertion. It shews that the excess of love cannot annul self; that,—so far is the bondage of self from being the fetters of a dream, opposed to love,—the intensest love, even when blest with the special favour of the gods, is powerless against the bondage of self. Protesilaus seems to be sent to the prayers of his wife for no purpose, except of proving that they who hear not Moses and the prophets, will not be persuaded even when one rises from the dead. Had the poet's original intention been to consign Laodamia to Erebus, the whole scheme of the poem must have been different. Her weakness would have been brought out more prominently; and the spirit of Protesilaus would hardly have been charged with the utterance of so many divine truths, when his sermon was to be as unavailing as if he had been preaching to the winds. The impotence of truth is not one of the aspects of human life which a poet may well choose as the central idea of a grave work. u.

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The reflective spirit is so dominant in the literature of the age, and it is so injurious to all

pure beauty in composition, that perhaps it will not be deemed idle trifling, if I point out one or two more instances in which it seems to me too obtrusive. And I will select them from the same great master of modern poetry; not only because his works stand criticism, and reward it, better than most others, so that even when tracking a fault, one is sure to light upon sundry beauties; but also because he is eminently the poet of his age, the poet in whom the best and highest tendencies of his contemporaries have found their fullest utterance.

There are few lovers of poetry but will remember the admirable account of the sailor in the *Brothers*; who

in his heart

Was half a shepherd in the stormy seas.  
 Oft in the piping shrouds had Leonard heard  
 The tones of waterfalls, and inland sounds  
 Of caves and trees; and when the regular wind  
 Between the tropics filled the steady sail,  
 And blew with the same breath through days and weeks,  
 Lengthening invisibly its weary line  
 Along the cloudless main, he, in those hours  
 Of tiresome indolence, would often hang  
 Over the vessel's side, and gaze, and gaze;  
 And, while the broad green wave and sparkling foam  
 Flashed round him images and hues that wrought  
 In union with the employment of his heart,  
 He, thus by feverish passion overcome,  
 Even with the organs of his bodily eye  
 Below him, in the bosom of the deep,  
 Saw mountains, saw the forms of sheep that grazed



On verdant hills, with dwellings among trees,  
And shepherds clad in the same country gray,  
Which he himself had worn.

Beautiful as this passage is, it would be all the better, I think, if the first of the two lines printed in italics were omitted, and the emphasis of the second diminished. At present they rather belong to a psychological analysis, than to a poetical representation, of feelings. It is true, the vision would be the effect of "feverish passion:" it would be visible "even to the organs of the bodily eye." So it is true, that a blush is caused by a sudden suffusion of blood to the cheek. But, though it might be physiologically correct to say, that, in consequence of the accelerated beating of the heart, there was such a determination of blood to the face, — the part of the body most apparent to him by whom the blush was occasioned, — that the veins became full, and the skin was tinged by it; yet no poet would write thus. The poet's business is to represent the effect, not the cause; the stem and leaves and blossoms, not the root; that which is visible to the imagination, not that which is discerned by the understanding: although by bringing out the important moment, which he selects for representation, and by insulating it from the extraneous circumstances, which in ordinary life surround and conceal it, he enables us to discern the causes more immediately, than we

should do when our thoughts are bewildered in the maze of outward realities.

Or look at this little poem :

Let other bards of angels sing,  
Bright suns without a spot :  
But thou art no such perfect thing :  
Rejoice that thou art not.

*Such if thou wert in all men's view,  
A universal show,  
What would my fancy have to do?  
My feelings to bestow?*

Heed not, though none should call thee fair :  
So, Mary, let it be !  
If nought in loveliness compare  
With what thou art to me.

True beauty dwells in deep retreats,  
Whose veil is unremoved,  
Till heart with heart in concord beats,  
And the lover is beloved.

This poem again, it seems to me, would be exceedingly improved by the expulsion of the second stanza. The other three have a sweet, harmonious unity, and express a truth, which if any one has not felt, he is greatly to be pitied. But the second stanza jars quite painfully with the others. Even if the thought conveyed in it were accurately true, it would be bringing forward the internal process, which in poetry ought to be latent. It is only a partial truth however, which, being stated by itself, as though it were the whole truth, becomes false. Beauty is represented, according to the notions of the egoistical idealists, as purely

subjective, as a mere creation of the beholder : whereas it arises from the conjoint and reciprocal action of the beholder and the object, as is so exquisitely express in the last stanza. Beauty is indeed in the mind, in the feelings : were there not the idea of Beauty in the beholder, associated with the feeling of pleasure, nothing would be beautiful or lovely to him. But it is also in the object : and the union and communion of the two is requisite to its full perception. According to the second stanza, the uglier a woman was, the more beautiful would she be : for the more would our fancy have to do, our feelings to bestow. And conversely, the more beautiful she was, the more destitute would she be of beauty.

Besides there is an unpoetical exclusiveness and isolation in grudging that what we deem beautiful should be beautiful "in all men's view," and in speaking scornfully of what is so as "a universal show." The poet will indeed perceive deeper and more spiritual beauties than other men ; and he will discern hidden springs and sources of Beauty, where others see nothing of the sort : but he will also acknowledge with thankfulness, that Beauty is spread abroad through earth and sea and sky, and dwells on the face and form, and in the heart of man : and he will shrink from the thought of its being a thing which he, or any one else, could monopolize. He will deem that the highest and most blessed privilege of his genius is, that it enables him to cherish the widest and fullest

sympathy with the hearts and thoughts of his brethren. u.

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“There is one class of minds (says Schelling, *Philosophische Schriften*, i. 388), who think *about* things, another, who strive to understand them in themselves, according to the essential properties of their nature.” This is one of the momentous distinctions between men of productive genius, and men of reflective talents. In the history of literature we find examples without number, how, on eating of the Tree of Knowledge, we are banished from the Tree of Life. Poets, it is plain from the very meaning of the word *poetry*, if they have any claim to their title, must belong to the class whose aim is to think and know the things themselves. Nor poets only: all that is best and truly living in history, in philosophy, and even in science, must have its root in the same essential knowledge, as distinguished from that which is merely circumstantial.

Here we have the reason why Poetry has been wont to flourish most in the earlier ages of a nation's intellectual life; because essential knowledge is not so apt then to be overrun, and stunted or driven awry, by circumstantial, production by reflexion. In all poetry that is really such, if it pretend to more than an ephemeral existence, as in all life, there must be a mysterious basis, which is and ever must be incomprehensible to the reflective understanding. There must be

something in it which can only be apprehended by a corresponding act of the imagination, discerning and reproducing the incarnate idea. Now that which cannot be comprehended by the reflective understanding of others, can still less have been produced by an act of the poet's own reflective understanding. Its source must lie deep within him, below the surface of his consciousness. The waters which are spread out above that surface, and which are not fed by an unseen fountain, are sure to dry up, and will never form a living, perennial stream. Indeed, if we look through the history of poetry, we find, in the case of all the greatest and most genial works, that, though their beauty may have manifested itself immediately to the simple instinctive feelings of mankind, ages have past away before the reflective understanding has attained anything like a correct estimate and analysis of their merits. For they have been truly mysterious, and have indeed possess a hidden life. But of most modern works it may be said, that they have been brought down to the level of the meanest capacities. That which is designed to be most mysterious in them, is thrust the most conspicuously into view. They need no time, no study, to detect their beauties. Knowing from their own consciousness how unimaginative men are wont to be, the authors interline their works with a commentary on their merits, and act as guides through their own estates. It is much as if all the leaves and

flowers in a garden were to be suddenly gifted with voices, and to begin crying out in clamorous consort, *Come and look at me, how beautiful I am!* What could a lover of Nature do amid such a hubbub, but seek out a tuft of violets, which could not but still be silent, and bury his face in it, and weep?

The examples hitherto cited, of the harm done to poetry by the intrusion of reflexion, have referred merely to lesser points of detail, and have been taken from the works of one who is indeed a poet of great imaginative power; although he too, as all men must, bears the marks of his age, of its weakness, as well as of its strength. There have been writers however, in whom the shadow has almost supplanted the substance, who give us the ghosts of things, instead of the realities, and who, having been taught to observe the ideas impersonated in the masterpieces of former ages, think they too may start up and claim rank among the priests of the Muses, if they set about giving utterance to the same ideas loudly and sonorously. They forget that roots should lie hid, that the heart and lungs and all the vital processes are out of sight, and that, if they are laid bare to the light, death ensues: and they would fain stick their roots atop of their heads, and carry their hearts in their hands. Instead of representing persons, we are apt to describe them. Nay, to shorten the labour, as others cannot look into them, and see all the

inward movements of their feelings, they are made to describe themselves.

Some dramatic writers have been wont to preface their plays with descriptive accounts of the characters they are about to bring on the stage. Shadwell, for instance, did so: the list of the *dramatis personae* in *the Squire of Alsatia* fills three pages: and a like practice is found in Wycherly, Congreve, and other writers of their times. Indeed it accords with the nature of their works, which are chiefly remarkable for wit,—a quality dealing in contrasts, and therefore implying the distinct consciousness necessarily brought out thereby,—and for acuteness of observation, where the observer feels himself set over against the objects he is observing: so that they are rather the offspring of the reflective understanding, working consciously in selecting, arranging, and combining the materials supplied to it from without, than of any genial, spontaneous, imaginative throes. Jonson too prefixt an elaborate catalogue of the same sort to his *Every Man out of his Humour*: and in him again we see a like predominance of reflexion, though in a mind of a higher and robuster order: nor are his characters the creations of a plastic imagination, blending the various elements of humanity indistinguishably into a living whole; but mosaic constructions, designed to exhibit the enormities and extravagances of some peculiar humour. All such lists are merely clumsy devices for furnishing the reader with

what he ought to deduce from the works themselves. It is offensively obtrusive to tell us beforehand what judgement we are to form on the persons we read of. It prevents our regarding them as living men, whom we are to study, and to compare with our idea of human nature. Instead of this we view them as fictions for an express purpose, and compare them therewith. We think, not what they are, but how they exemplify the proposition which the writer designed to enforce: and wherever the author's purpose is prominent, art degenerates into artifice. In logic indeed the enunciation rightly precedes the proof. But the workings of poetry are more subtle and complicated and indirect: nor are our feelings so readily toucht by what a man intends to say or to do or to be, as by what he says and does and is without intending it. Thus we involuntarily recognise the hollowness of all that man does, when cut off from that spring of life, which, though in him, is not of him. Moreover to the author himself it must needs be hurtful, when he sets to work with a definite purpose of exhibiting such and such qualities, instead of living, concrete men. It leads him to consider, not how such a man would speak and act, but how on every occasion he may display his besetting humour; which yet in real life he would mostly conceal, and which would scarcely vent itself, except under some special excitement, when he was thrown off his balance, and made forgetful of self-restraint.



Still the humours and peculiar aspects of human nature thus portrayed by the second-rate poets of former times are those which do actually rise the most conspicuously and obtrusively above the common surface of life, and which not seldom betray themselves by certain fixed habits of speech, gesture, and manner; so that there is less inappropriateness in their being made thus prominent. But the psychological analysis of criticism has enabled us to discern deeper and more latent springs, and more delicate shades, of feeling in the masters of poetry: and those feelings, which are only genuine and powerful when latent, are now drawn forward into view, whereupon they splash and vanish.

For example, no sooner had attention been called, some fifty years ago, to the powerful influence exercised by Fate, as the dark ground of the Greek tragedies, than poet after poet in Germany, from Schiller downward, set about composing tragedies on the principle of fatality; each insisting that his own was the true Fate, and that all others were spurious and fictitious. And so in fact they were: only his was no less so. Nor could it well be otherwise. When the Greek tragedians wrote, the overruling power of Fate was a living article of faith, both with them and with the people; as everything ought to be, which is made the leading idea in a tragedy. Since a drama, by the conditions of its representation, addresses itself to the assembled people, if it is to act strongly upon them, it must appeal to those feelings and thoughts which actually

hold sway over them. Tragic poetry is indeed fond of drawing its plots and personages from the stores of ancient history or fable; partly because the immediate present is too full of petty details to coalesce into a grand imaginative unity, whereas antiquity even of itself is majestic; partly because it stirs so many personal feelings and interests, which sort ill with dignity and with solemn contemplation; and partly because a tragic catastrophe befalling a contemporary would have too much of painful horror. Yet, though the personages of tragedy may rightly be taken from former ages, or from foreign countries, — remoteness in space being a sort of equivalent for remoteness in time, — still a true dramatic poet will always make the universal human element in his characters predominate over the accidental costume of age and country. Nor will he bring forward any mode of faith or superstition as a prominent agent in his tragedy, except such as will meet with something responsive in the popular belief of his age. When Shakspeare wrote, almost everybody believed in ghosts and witches. Hence it is difficult for us to conceive the impression which must have been made on such an audience by *Hamlet* and *Macbeth*: whereas the witches in the latter play now, on the stage, produce the effect of broad, fantastical caricatures; and so far are we from comprehending the power which the demoniacal apparitions exercised over Macbeth's mind, that they are seldom seen without peals of hoarse, dissonant laughter. In like

manner Fate, in the modern German tragedies, instead of being awful, is either ludicrous or revolting. As it is not an object of faith, either with the poet or his hearers, so that they would hardly observe its latent working, he brings it forth into broad daylight; and his whole representation is cold, artificial, pompous, and untrue. While in Greek tragedy Fate stalks in silence among the generations of mankind, visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children and grandchildren,—*τῆς μὲν θ' ἀπαλοὶ πόδες· οὐ γὰρ ἐπ' οὔδει Πίλναται, ἀλλ' ἄρα ἦγε κατ' ἀνδρῶν κράατα βαίνει,*—on the modern German stage it clatters in wooden shoes, and springs its rattle, and clutches its victim by the throat.

U.

Your good sayings would be far better, if you did not think them so good. He who is in a hurry to laugh at his own jests, is apt to make a false start, and then has to return with downcast head to his place.

U.

Many nowadays write what may be called a dashing style. Unable to put much meaning into their words, they try to eke it out by certain marks which they attach to them, something like pigtails sticking out at right angles to the body. The finest models of this style are in the articles by the original editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, and in Lord Byron's poems, above all, in *the Corsair*, his most popular work, as one might have

expected that it would be, seeing that his faults came to a head in it. A couplet from *the Bride of Abydos* may instance my meaning.

A thousand swords—thy Selim's heart and hand—  
Wait—wave—defend—destroy—at thy command.

How much grander is this, than if there had been nothing between the lines but commas! even as a pigtail is grander than a curl, or at least has been deemed so by many a German prince. Tacitus himself, though his words are already as solid and substantial as one can wish, yet, when translated, is drest after the same fashion, with a skewer jutting out here and there. The celebrated sentence of Galgacus is turned into *He makes a solitude—and calls it—peace*. The noble poet places a flourish after every second word, like a vulgar writing-master. Or perhaps they are rather marks of admiration, standing prostrate, as Lord Castle-reagh would have exprest it. Nor are upright ones spared. v.

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Are you quite sure that Pygmalion is the only person who ever fell in love with his own handiwork? v.

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“In good prose (says Frederic Schlegel) every word should be underlined.” That is, every word should be the right word; and then no word would be righter than another. There are no italics in Plato.

What! asks Holofernes; did Plato print his books all in romans?

In mentioning Plato, I mentioned him whose style seems to be the summit of perfection. But if it be objected that the purpose of italics is to give force to style, which Plato, from the character of his subjects, was not solicitous about, I would reply, that there are no italics in Demosthenes. Nor are there in any of the Greek or Roman writers, though some of them were adepts in the art of putting as much meaning into words, as words are well fitted to bear.

Among the odd combinations which Chance is ever and anon turning up, few are more whimsical than the notion that one is to gain strength by substituting italics for romans. In Italy one should not be surprised, if for the converse change a man were to incur a grave suspicion of designing to revive the projects of Rienzi, to be expiated by half a dozen years of *carcere duro*. Nay, the very shape of the letters would rather lead to the opposite conclusion, that *morbidezza* was the quality aimed at.

Two large classes of persons in these days are fond of underlining their words.

It is a favorite practice with a number of female letter-writers,—those, I mean, who have not yet crost over the river of self-consciousness into the region of quiet, unobtrusive grace, and whose intellectual pulses are always in a flutter, at one moment thumping, the next scarcely

perceptible. Their consciousness of no-meaning worries them so, that the meaning, which, they are aware, is not in any words they can use, they try to put into them by scoring them, like a leg of pork, which their letters now and then much resemble.

On the other hand some men of vigorous minds, but more conversant with things than with words, and who, having never studied composition as an art, have not learnt that the real force of style must be effortless, and consists mainly in its simplicity and appropriateness, fancy that common words are not half strong enough to say what they want to say ; and so they try to strengthen them by writing them in a different character. Men of science do this : for words with them are signs, which must stand out to be conspicuous. Soldiers often do this : for, though a few of them are among the most skilful in the drilling and manouvring of words, the chief part have no notion that a word may be louder than a cannon-ball, and sharper than a sword. Cobbett again is profuse of italics. This instance may be supposed to refute the assertion, that the writers who use them are not versè in the art of composition. But, though Cobbett was a wonderful master of plain speech, all his writings betray his want of logical and literary culture. He had never sacrificed to the Graces ; who cannot be won without many sacrifices. He cared only for strength ; and, as his own bodily frame was of the Herculean, rather than the

Apollinean cast, he thought that a man could not be very strong, unless he displayed his thews. Besides a Damascus blade would not have gashed his enemies enough for his taste : he liked to have a few notches on his sword.

To a refined taste a parti-lettered page is much as if a musician were to strike a note every now and then in a wrong key, for the sake of startling attention. The proper use of italics seems to be, when the word italicized is not meant to be a mere part of the flowing medium of thought, but is singled out to be made a special object of notice, whether on account of its etymology, or of something peculiar in its form or meaning. As the word is employed in a different mode, there is a sort of reason for marking that difference by a difference of character. On like grounds words in a foreign language, speeches introduced, whether in a narrative or a didactic work, quotations from Scripture, and those words in other quotations to which attention is especially called, as bearing immediately on the point under discussion, may appropriately be printed in italics. This rule seems to agree with the practice of the best French writers, as well as of our own, and is confirmed by the best editions of the Latin classics, in which orthography, punctuation, and the like minuter matters, are treated far more carefully than in modern works. u.

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What a dull, stupid lake! It makes no noise: one can't hear it flowing: it is as still as a sheet of glass. It rolls no mud along, and no soapsuds. It lets you see into it, and through it, and does nothing all day but look at the sky, and shew you pictures of everything round about, which are just as like as if they were the very things themselves. And if you go to drink, it shews you your own face. Hang it! I wish it would give us something of its own. I wish it would roar a little.

Such is the substance of Bottom's criticisms on Goethe, which in one or other of his shapes he has brayed out in many an English Review. Sometimes one might fancy he must have seen the vision which scared Peter Bell.

Nor is Goethe the only writer who has to stand reproved, because he does not pamper the love of noise and dust. Nor is it in books alone that our morbid restlessness desires to find a response. The howling wind lashes the waves, and makes them roar in symphony. This is a type of the spirit which revels in revolutions. u.

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*Why do you drug your wine?* a merchant was askt by one of his customers.

*Because nobody would drink it without.*

Is it not just so with Truth? Bacon at least has declared that it is: and how many writers have lived in the course of three thousand years, who have not acted on this persuasion, more or less distinctly? nay, how many men who have not



dealt in like manner even with their own hearts and minds? u.

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We have earnt to exclaim against the yew-trees which are cut out into such fantastical shapes in Dutch gardens, and to recognise that a yew-tree ought to be a yew-tree, and not a peacock or a swan. This may seem a trivial truism; and yet it is an important truth, of very wide and manifold application; though it does not involve that we are to let children run wild, and that all Education is a violation of Nature. But it does involve the true principle of Education, and may teach us that its business is to *educer*, or bring out, that which is within, not merely, or mainly, to *instruct*, or impose a form from without. Only we are not framed to be self-sufficient, but to derive our nourishment, intellectual and spiritual, as well as bodily, from without, through the ministrations of others; and hence Instruction must ever be a chief element of Education. Hence too we obtain a criterion to determine what sort of Instruction is right and beneficial, — that which ministers to Education, which tends to bring out, to nourish and cultivate the faculties of the mind, not that which merely piles a mass of information upon them. Moreover since Nature, if left to herself, is ever prone to run wild, and since there are hurtful and pernicious elements around us, as well as nourishing and salutary, pruning and sheltering, correcting

and protecting are also among the principal offices of Education.

But the love of artificiality is not restricted to the Dutch, in whom it may find much excuse from the meagre poverty of the forms of Nature around them, and whose country itself thus in a manner prepared them for becoming the Chinese of Europe. There are still many modes in which few can be brought to acknowledge that a yew-tree ought to be a yew-tree: and when we think how beautiful a yew-tree is, left to itself, and crowned with the solemn grandeur of a thousand years, we need not marvel that people should be slower to admit this proposition as to things less majestic and more fleeting. Indeed I hardly know who ever lived, except perhaps Shakspeare, who did acknowledge it in its fulness and variety: and even he doubtless can only have done so in the mirror of his world-reflecting imagination. At all events very many are most reluctant to acknowledge it, and that too under the impulse of totally opposite feelings, not merely with regard to persons whom they dislike, and whom they paint, like Bolognese pictures, on a dark ground, but even with regard to their friends, whom they ought to love for what they are. Yet they will not let their friends be such as they are, or such as they were meant to be, but pare and twist them into imaginary shapes, as though they could not love them until they had made dolls of them, until they saw the impress of their own hands upon them. So too is it with most writers

of fiction, and even of history. They do not give us living men, but either puppets, or skeletons, or, it may be, shadows : and these puppets may at times be giants, as though a Lilliputian were dandling a Brobdignagian. For bigness with the bulk of mankind is the nearest synonym for greatness. U.

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A celebrated preacher is in the habit of saying, that, in preaching, the thing of least consequence is the Sermon : and they who remember the singular popularity of the late Dean Andrewes, or who turn from the other records of Bishop Wilson's life to his writings, will feel that there is more in this saying than its strangeness. The latter instance shews that the most effective of all sermons, and that which gives the greatest efficacy to every other, is the sermon of a Christian life.

But, apart from this consideration, the saying just cited coincides in great measure with the declaration of Demosthenes, that, in speaking, Delivery is the first thing, and the second, and the third. For this reason oratorical excellence is rightly called Eloquence.

Commonly indeed the apophthegm of Demosthenes has been understood in a narrower sense, as limited to Action, whereby it becomes a startling paradox. Even Landor has adopted this version of it, and makes Eschines attack Demosthenes on account of this absurdity, in his Conversation with Phocion ; while Demosthenes, in that with

Eubulides, adduces this as a main distinction between himself and Pericles, expressing it with characteristic majesty: "I have been studious to bring the powers of Action into play, that great instrument in exciting the affections, which Pericles disdained. He and Jupiter could strike any head with their thunderbolts, and stand serene and immovable: I could not." And again a little after: "Pericles, you have heard, used none, but kept his arm wrapt up within his vest. Pericles was in the enjoyment of that power, which his virtues and his abilities well deserved. If he had carried in his bosom the fire that burns in mine, he would have kept his hand outside."

Still this interpretation seems to have no better origin than the passages in which Cicero, when alluding to the anecdote of Demosthenes (*De Orat.* iii. 56. *De Clar. Orat.* 38. *Orat.* 17), uses the word *Actio*. Many errors have arisen from the confounding of special significations of words, which are akin, both etymologically and in their primary meaning, like *Actio* and *Action*. But I believe, the Latin *Actio*, in its rhetorical application, was never restricted within our narrow bounds: indeed we ourselves reject this restriction in the dramatic use of *acting* and *actor*. The vivid senses of the Romans felt that the more spiritual members of the body can act, as well as the grosser and more massive; and they who have lived in southern climes know that this attribute of savage life has not been extinguished there

by civilization. Indeed the context in the three passages of Cicero ought to have prevented the blunder: his principal agents are the voice and the eyes: "animi est enim omnis actio, et imago animi vultus, indices oculi:" and he defines *Actio* to be "corporis quaedam eloquentia, cum constet e voce atque motu." Even after the mistake had been made, it ought to have been corrected, by the observation that Quintilian (xi. 3) has substituted *Pronunciatio* for *Actio*. But the whole story is plain, and the exaggeration accounted for, when we read it in the Lives of the Ten Orators ascribed to Plutarch. Every one has heard of the bodily disadvantages which Demosthenes had to contend with. No man has more triumphantly demonstrated the dominion of the mind over the body; for few speakers have had graver natural disqualifications for oratory, than he whose name in the history of oratory stands beyond competition the foremost. Having been cought down, as we term it, one day, he was walking home despondently. But Eunomus the Thriasian, who was already an old man, met him and encouraged him: so too did the actor Andronicus still more, telling him that his speeches were well, but that he failed in action and delivery (*λείποι δὲ τὰ τῆς ὑποκρίσεως*). He then reminded him of what he had spoken in the assembly; whereupon Demosthenes, believing him, gave himself up to the instruction of Andronicus. Hence, when some one askt him what is the first thing in oratory, he said *ὑπόκρισις*, *Manner*, or

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μοσθένους δεινότητος, § xxii) βαγο, ... he was acknowledged by all to be the most consummate master of *ὑπόκρισις*. His own experience had taught him how the effect of a speech depended almost entirely upon its delivery, by the defects of which his earlier orations had been marred ; as

Bacon, in his *Essay on Boldness*, after giving the erroneous version of our anecdote, remarks: "He said it, that knew it best, and had by nature himself no advantage in that he commended." The objections which are subjoined to this remark, are founded mainly on the misunderstanding of what Demosthenes had said.

Still, though there is a considerable analogy between the importance of manner or delivery in speaking and in preaching, it should be borne in mind that nothing is more injurious to the effect of the latter, than whatever is artificial, studied, theatrical. Besides, while, as a friend observes, *ὑπόκρισις* has often been a main ingredient in oratory under more senses than one, when it enters into preaching under the sense denounced in the New Testament, it is the poison, a drop of which shivers the glass to atoms. In fact the reason why delivery is of such force, is that, unless a man appears by his outward look and gesture to be himself animated by the truths he is uttering, he will not animate his hearers. It is the live coal that kindles others, not the dead. Nay, the same principle applies to all oratory; and what made Demosthenes the greatest of orators, was that he appeared the most entirely possessed by the feelings he wished to inspire. The main use of his *ὑπόκρισις* was, that it enabled him to remove the natural hindrances which check and clogged the stream of those feelings, and to pour them forth with a free and mighty torrent that swept his

audience along. The effect produced by Charles Fox, who by the exaggerations of party-spirit was often compared to Demosthenes, seems to have arisen wholly from this earnestness, which made up for the want of almost every grace, both of manner and style. \_\_\_\_\_ u.

Most people, I should think, must have been visited at times by those moods of waywardness, in which a feeling adopts the language usually significant of its opposite. Oppressive joy finds vent in tears ; frantic grief laughs. So inadequate are the outward exponents of our feelings, that, when a feeling swells beyond its wont, it bursts through its ordinary face, and lays bare the reverse of it. Something of the sort may be discerned in the exclamation of Eschines just quoted. No laudatory term could have expressed his admiration so forcibly as the single word *θήριον*. \_\_\_\_\_ u.

The proposition asserted a couple of pages back, that genius is unconscious of its own excellence, has been contested by my dear friend, Sterling, in his Essay on Carlyle. In his argument on this point there is some truth, which required perhaps to be stated, for the sake of limiting the too exclusive enforcement of the opposite truth : but there is no sufficient recognition of that opposite truth, which is of far greater moment in the present stage of the human mind, and which Mr Carlyle had



been proclaiming with much power, though not without his favorite exaggerations. I will not take upon me to arbitrate between the combatants, by trying to shew how far each is in the right, and where each runs into excess: but, as Sterling adduces some passages from Shakspeare's Sonnets, in proof that he was not so unconscious of his own greatness, as he has commonly been deemed, I will rejoin, that the distinction pointed out above seems to remove this objection. If Shakspeare speaks somewhat boastfully of his Sonnets, we are to remember that they were not, like his Plays, the spontaneous utterances and creations of his Genius, but artificial compositions, artificial even in their structure, and alien in their origin, hardly yet naturalized. Besides there is a sort of conventional phraseology, handed down from the age of Horace, and which he had inherited from that of Pindar, whereby poets magnify their art, declaring that, while all other memorials of greatness perish, those committed to immortal verse will endure. In speaking thus the poet is magnifying his art, rather than himself. But of the wonderful excellence of his Plays, we have no reason for believing that Shakspeare was at all aware; though Sterling does not go beyond the mark, when he says, that, "if in the wreck of Britain, and all she has produced, one treament of her spirit could be saved by an interposing Genius, to be the endowment of a new world," it would be the volume that contains them. Yet Shakspeare

himself did not take the trouble of publishing that volume ; and even the single Plays printed during his life seem to have been intended for playgoers, rather than to gain fame for their author.

I grant that, in this world of ours, in which the actual is ever diverging from or falling short of its idea, the unconsciousness, which belongs to Genius in its purity, cannot be preserved undefiled, any more than that which belongs to Goodness in its purity. Miserable experience must have taught us that it is impossible not to let the left hand know what the right hand is doing ; and yet this is the aim set before us, not merely the lower excellence of not letting others know, but the Divine Perfection of not knowing it ourselves. The same thing holds with regard to Genius. There are numbers of alarums on all sides to arouse our self-consciousness, should it ever flag or lag, from our cradle upward. Whithersoever we go, we have bells on our toes to regale our carnal hearts with their music ; and bellmen meet us in every street to sound their chimes in our ears. Others tell us how clever we are ; and we repeat the sweet strains with ceaseless iteration, magnifying them at every repetition. Hence it is next to a marvel if Genius can ever preserve any of that unconsciousness which belongs to its essence ; and this is why, when all talents are multiplying, Genius becomes rarer and rarer with the increase of civilization, as is also the fate of its moral analogon, Heroism.

Narcissus-like it wastes away in gazing on its own loved image.

Yet still Nature is mighty, in spite of all that man does to weaken and pervert her. Samsons are still born ; and though to the fulness and glory of their strength it is requisite that the razor should not trim their exuberant locks into forms which they may regard with complacency in the flattering mirror of self-consciousness, the hair, after it has been cut off, may still grow again, and they may recover some of their pristine vigour. But in such cases, as has been instanced in so many of the most genial minds during the last hundred years, the energies, which had been cropt and checkt by the perversities of the social system, are apter, when they burst out afresh, for the work of destruction, than of production, even at the cost of perishing among the ruins, which they drag down on the objects of their hatred.

Of the poets of recent times, the one who has achieved the greatest victory over the obstructions presented to the pure exercise of the Imagination by the reflective spirit and the restless self-consciousness of modern civilization, there can be little question, is Goethe : and the following remarks in one of Schiller's earliest letters to him may help us to understand how that victory was gained, confirming and illustrating much of what has just been said. " Your attentive observation, which rests upon objects with such calmness and simplicity, preserves you from the risk of wandering

into those by-paths, into which both Speculation and the Imagination, when following its own arbitrary impulses, are so apt to stray. Your unerring intuitions embrace everything in far more completeness, which Analysis laboriously hunts out; and solely because it lies thus as a whole in you, are you unaware of your own riches: for unhappily we only know what we separate. Minds of your class therefore seldom know how far they have penetrated, and how little reason they have to borrow from Philosophy, which has only to learn from them. Philosophy can merely resolve what is given to her: giving is not the act of Analysis, but of Genius, which carries on its combinations according to objective laws, under the dim but sure guidance of the pure Reason.— You seek for what is essential in Nature; but you seek it by the most difficult path, from which a weaker intellect would shrink. You take the whole of Nature together, in order to gain light on its particular members: in the totality of its phenomena you search after the explanation of individual objects. From the simplest forms of organization, you mount step by step to the more complex, so as at length to construct the most complex of all, man, genetically out of the materials of the whole edifice of Nature. By reproducing him, so to say, in conformity to the processes of Nature, you try to pierce into his hidden structure. A great and truly heroic idea! which sufficiently shews how your mind combines the

rich aggregate of your conceptions into a beautiful unity. You can never have hoped that your life would be adequate for such a purpose; but the mere entering on such a course is of higher value than the completion of any other; and you have chosen like Achilles between Phthia and immortality. Had you been born a Greek, or even an Italian, and been surrounded from your cradle by exquisite forms of Nature and ideal forms of Art, your journey would have been greatly shortened, or perhaps rendered wholly needless. The very first aspect of things would have presented them in their necessary forms; and your earliest experience would have led you to the grand style in art. But, as you were born a German, as your Greek mind was cast into our Northern world, you had no other choice, except either to become a Northern artist, or by the help of reflexion to gain for your imagination, what the realities around you denied to it, and thus by a sort of inward act and intellectual process to bring forth your works as though you were in Greece. At that period of life, at which the soul fashions its inner world from the outer, being surrounded by defective forms, you had received the impressions of our wild, Northern Nature, when your victorious Genius, being superior to its materials, became inwardly conscious of this want, and was outwardly confirmed in its consciousness through your acquaintance with the Nature of Greece. Hereupon you were forced to correct the old impressions

previously graven on your imagination by a meaner Nature, according to the higher model which your formative spirit created ; and such a work cannot be carried on, except under the guidance of ideal conceptions. But this logical direction, which the spirit of reflexion is compelled to take, does not agree well with the esthetical processes through which alone the mind can produce. Thus you had an additional labour ; for, as you had past over from immediate contemplations to abstractions, you had now to transform your conceptions back again into intuitions, and your thoughts into feelings ; because it is only by means of these that Genius can bring forth. This is the notion I have formed of the course of your mind ; and you will know best whether I am right. But what you can hardly know,—because Genius is always the greatest mystery to itself,—is the happy coincidence of your philosophical instinct with the purest results of speculative Reason. At first sight indeed it would seem as though there could be no stronger opposition than between the speculative spirit, which starts from unity, and the intuitive, which starts from multiplicity. But if the former seeks after Experience with a chaste and faithful purpose, and if the latter seeks after Law with a free, energetic exercise of thought, they cannot fail of meeting halfway. It is true that the intuitive mind deals only with individuals, and the speculative with classes. But if an intuitive spirit is genial, and seeks for the impress of necessity in

the objects of experience, though it will always produce individuals, they will bear the character of a class : and if the speculative spirit is genial, and does not lose sight of experience, while rising above experience, though it will only produce classes, they will be capable of life, and have a direct relation to realities."

There are some questionable positions in this passage, above all, the exaggerated depreciation of the northern spirit, and exaltation of the classical, from which misjudgement Goethe in his youth was one of our first deliverers, though in after years he perhaps gave it too much encouragement, and which exercised a noxious influence upon Schiller, as we see in his *Bride of Messina*, and in the frantic Paganism of his ode on the Gods of Greece. But the discussion of these questions would require a survey of the great age of German literature. My reasons for quoting the passage are, that it asserts what seems to me the truth with regard to the unconsciousness of Genius, and that it sets forth the difficulty of preserving that unconsciousness in an age of intellectual cultivation, shewing at the same time how it has been overcome by him who of all men has done the most in the way of overcoming it. A mighty Genius will transform its conceptions back into intuitions, even as the technical rules of music or painting are assimilated by a musician or a painter, and as we speak and write according to the rules of grammar, without ever thinking

about them. But it requires a potent Genius to carry this assimilative power into the higher regions of thought. u.

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When a poetical spirit first awakens in a people, and seeks utterance in song, its utterances are almost entirely objective. The child's mind is well nigh absorbed for a time in the objects of its perceptions, and is scarcely conscious of its own existence as independent and apart from them; and in like manner the poet, in the childhood of a nation,—which is of far longer duration than that of an individual, because the latter is surrounded by persons in a more advanced state, who lift and draw him up to their level, whereas a people has to mount step by step, without aid, and in spite of the *vis inertiae* of the mass,—the poet, I say, in this stage, seems to lose himself in the objects of his song, and hardly to contemplate himself in his distinctness and separation. Nor does he make those distinctions among these objects, which the refinements of more cultivated ages establish, often not without arbitrary fastidiousness. All things are interesting to him, if they shew forth life and power: the more they have of life and power, the more interesting they become: but even the least things are so, as they are also to a child, by a kind of natural sympathy, not by an act of the will fixing itself reflectively upon them, according to the process so frequently exemplified in



Wordsworth. Thus we see next to nothing of the poet in the Homeric poems, in the Niebelungen, in the ballads of early ages. To represent what is and has been, suffices for delight. Nothing further is needed. Poetry is rather a natural growth of the mind, than a work of art. The umbilical chord, which connects it with its mother, has not yet been severed.

In youth the objects of childish perceptions become the objects of feelings, of desires, of passions. Self puts forth its horns. Consciousness wakes up out of its dreamy slumber; but the objects of that consciousness, which stir and excite it, are outward. Hence it finds vent in lyrical poetry; but this lyrical poetry will be objective, in that it will be the vivid utterance of actual feelings, not a counterfeit, nor a meditative analysis of them.

Moreover in both these forms poetry will be essentially and thoroughly national. Indeed all true poetry must be so, and all poetry in early ages will be so of necessity. For in the early ages of a people all its members have a sort of generic character: the individualizing features come out later, with the progress of cultivation; and still later is the introduction of foreign elements; which at once multiply varieties, and impair distinct individuality. But a poet is the child of his people, the firstborn of his age, the highest representative of the national mind, which in him finds an utterance for its inmost secrets.

The vivid sympathies with nature and with man, which constitute him a poet, must needs be excited the most powerfully, from his childhood upward, by those forms of outward nature and of human, with which he has been the most conversant; and when he speaks, he will desire to speak so as to find an answer in the hearts of his hearers. In the ballad or epic he merely exhibits the objects of their own faith to them, of their own love and fear and hatred and desire, their own views of man and of the powers above him, their favorite legends, the very sights and sounds, the forms and colours, the incidents and adventures, they are most familiar with and most delight in. As the German poet has said,

Think you that all would have listened to Homer, that all would  
have read him,  
Had he not smoothed his way to the heart by persuading his  
reader,  
That he is just what he wishes? and do we not high in the  
palace,  
And in the chieftain's tent see the soldier exult in the Iliad?  
While in the street and the market, where citizens gather  
together,  
All far gladlier hear of the craft of the vagrant Ulysses.  
There the warrior beholdeth himself in his helmet and armour;  
Here in Ulysses the beggar perceives how his rags are  
ennobled.

In like manner the lyrical poetry of early ages is the national expression of feeling and of passion, of love and of devotion,—national both in its modes and in its objects.

This however is little more than the blossoms which are scattered, more or less abundantly, over a fruit-tree in spring, and which gleam with starry brightness amid the dark network of the leafless branches. As the season advances, Nature no longer contents herself with these fleeting manifestations of her exuberant playfulness: the down on the boyish cheek gives place to the rougher manly beard, the smile of merriment to the sedate, stern aspect of thought: she strips herself of the bloom with which she had been toying, arrays her form in motherly green; and, though she cannot repress the pleasure of still putting forth flowers here and there, her main task is now, not to dally with the air and sunshine, but to convert them into nourishing fruit, and living, generative seed. Feeling, passion, desire, kindling often into fervid intensity, are the predominant characters of youth. In manhood, when it is really attained to, these are controlled and subjugated by the will. The business of manhood is to act. Thus the manhood of poetry is the drama. The continuous flow of outward events, the simple effusion of feelings venting themselves in song, will not suffice to fill the mind of a people, when it has found out that its proper calling and work is to act, to shape the world after its own forms and wishes, to rule over it, and to battle incessantly with all manner of enemies, especially those which the will raises against itself, by struggling against the moral laws of the universe.

Now the whole form, and all the conditions of dramatic poetry, according to its original conception,—which is an essential part of its idea,—imply that it is to be address, more directly than any other kind of poetry, to large bodies of hearers, who assemble out of all classes, and may therefore be regarded as representatives of the whole nation, and that it is to stir them by acting immediately on their understanding and their feelings. Hence the adaptation to them, which is requisite in all poetry, is above all indispensable to the drama; and it belongs to the essence of dramatic poetry to be national. So too it has been, in the countries in which it has greatly flourished, in Greece, in Spain, in England. In France also comedy has been so, the only kind which has prospered there. For as to French tragedy, it is a hybrid exotic, aiming mainly at a classical form, yet omitting the very feature which had led to the adoption of that form, the chorus, and substituting a conventional artificiality of sentiments and manners for the ideal simplicity of the Greeks. It was designed for the court, not for the people.

In these latter times a new body has sprung up, to whom writers address themselves, that which Coleridge jeers at under the title of *the Reading Public*. Now for many modes of authorship, for philosophy, for science, for philology and all other *ologies*, indeed for prose generally, with the exception of the various branches of oratory, it has

ever been a necessary condition that they should be designed for readers. With regard to these the danger is, that, in proportion as the studious readers are swallowed up and vanish in the mass of the unstudious, that which, from its speculative or learned character, ought to require thought and knowledge, may be debased by being popularized. The true philosopher's aim must ever be, *Fit audience let me find, though few*. But, through the general diffusion of reading, a multitude of people have become more or less conversant with books, and have attained to some sort of acquaintance with literature. This is the public for which our modern poets compose. They no longer sing; they are no longer *ἀοιδοί*, bards: they are mere writers of verses. Instead of sounding a trumpet in the ears of a nation, they play on the flute before a select auditory.

This is injurious to poetry in many ways. It has become more artificial. It no longer aims at the same broad, grand, overpowering effects. It is grown elegant, ingenious, refined, delicate, sentimental, didactic. Instead of epic poems, in which the heart and mind of a people roll out their waves of thought and feeling, to receive them back into their own bosom, we have poems constructed according to rules, which are not inherent laws, but maxims deduced by empirical abstraction; and we even get at length to compositions, like some of Southey's, in which materials are scraped together from the four quarters of the world,

and the main part of the poetry may often lie in the notes,—not those of the harp awakening the bard to a sympathetic flow of emotion, but of the artificer exhibiting the processes of his own craft. A somewhat similar change comes over lyric poetry. It takes to expressing sentiment, rather than feeling; though here may be a grand compensation, as we see eminently in Wordsworth.

But to no kind of poetry is this revolution of the national mind, this migration out of the period of unconscious production into that of reflective composition, more hurtful than to the Drama. Hence, when a nation has had a great dramatic age, as it has been an age of intense national life, like that which followed the Persian wars in Greece, and the reign of our Elizabeth, so has it been anterior to the age when reflexion became predominant, and has been cut short thereby. Hence too in Germany, as the effect of the religious Schism, in which the new spirit did not gain the same political ascendancy as in England, and that of the Thirty Years war,—unlike that of foreign wars, which unite and concentrate the energies of a people,—was to denationalize the nation, the period which would else have been fit for the drama, past away almost barrenly; and when poets of high genius began to employ themselves upon it, in the latter half of the last century, the true dramatic age was gone by, so that their works mostly bear the character of posthumous, or postobits. In Goethe's dramas indeed, as in all his works, we

find the thoughts and speculations and doubts and questionings, the feelings and passions, the desires and aspirations and antipathies, the restless cravings, the boastful weaknesses, the self-pampering diseases of his own age, that is, of an age in which the elementary constituents of human nature have been filtered through one layer of books after another: but for this very reason his dramas are wanting in much that is essential to a drama,—in action, the proper province of which is the outward world of Nature and man,—and in theatrical power, being mostly better fitted for meditative reading than for scenic representation.

The special difficulty which besets the poets of these later days, arises from this, that they cannot follow the simple impulses of their genius, but are under the necessity of comparing these every moment with the results of reflexion and analysis. It is not merely that the great poets of earlier times preoccupy the chief objects and topics of poetical interest, and thus, as has been argued, drive their successors into the byways and the outskirts of the poetical world, and compell those who would excell or emulate them, to betake themselves to intellectual antics and extravagances. Whatever of truth may lie in this remark, is merely superficial. Every age has its own peculiar forms of moral and intellectual life; and Goethe has fully proved that an abundant store of materials for the creative powers of the Imagination were to be found, by those who had eyes to discern


them, in what might have been deemed an utterly prosaic age. The difficulty to which I am referring, is that which he himself has so happily expressed, when, in speaking of some comparisons that had been instituted between himself and Shakspeare, he said: *Shakspeare always hits the right nail on the head at once; but I have to stop and think which is the right nail, before I hit.*

It is true, that from the very first certain rules and maxims of art, pertaining to its outward forms, became gradually established, with which the poet is in a manner bound to comply, even as he is with the rules of metre. But such rules, as I have already said, are readily assimilated and incorporated by the Imagination, which recognises its own types and processes in them, and grows in time to conform to them without thinking of them. This however is far more difficult, when analysis and reflexion have dug down to the deeper principles of poetry, and it yet behoves us to shape our works according to those principles, without any conscious reference, conforming to them as it were instinctively. That this can be done, we see in Goethe; and the observations of Schiller quoted above are an attempt to explain the process. An instance too of the manner in which the Imagination works according to secret laws, without being distinctly conscious of them, is afforded by Goethe's answer, when Schiller objected to the conclusion of his beautiful Idyl, *Alexis and Dora*. After giving one reason for it founded on the workings of nature, and another



on the principles of art, which reasons, it is plain, he had been quite unconscious of, though he had acted under their influence, until he was called upon for an explanation, he adds: "Thus much in justification of the inexplicable instinct by which such things are produced."

For an example of the opposite error, I might refer to what was said some thirty pages back about the manner in which Fate has been introduced in a number of recent German tragedies, much as though, instead of the invisible laws of attraction, we were called to gaze on a planetary system kept in motion by myriads of ropes and pulleys. A like illustration might be drawn from the prominence often given to the diversities of national character; with regard to which point reflexion of late years has attained to correcter views, and, in so doing, as is for ever the case, has justified the perceptions of early ages. Among the results from the decay of the Imagination, and the exclusive predominance of the practical Understanding, one was the losing sight of the peculiarities of individual and of national character. The abstract generalization, man, compounded according to prescription of such and such virtues, or of such and such vices, was substituted for the living person, whose features receive their tone and expression from the central principle of his individuality. Hence our serious poetry hardly produced a character from the time of Milton to that of Walter Scott. On the other



hand, among the ideas after which the foremost minds of the last hundred years have been striving, is that of individuality, and, as coordinate therewith, of nationality, not indeed in its older forms, as cut off from the grand unity of mankind, but as a living component part of it. That this idea, though it had not been philosophically enunciated, preexisted in the poetical Imagination, we see in Shakspeare, especially in his Roman plays. In Shakspeare however this nationality is represented rightly, as determining and moulding the character, but not as talking of itself, not as being aware that it is anything else than an essential part of the order of Nature. Coriolanus is a Roman; but he is not for ever telling us so. Rome is in his heart: if you were to anatomize him, you would find it mixt with his lifeblood, and pervading every vein: but it does not flit about the tip of his tongue. Indeed so far is the declaration of what one is from being necessary to the reality of one's being, that it is more like the sting of those insects which die on the wound they inflict.

To turn to an instance of an opposite kind: Muellner, a German playwright, who gained great celebrity in his own country about thirty years ago, and some of whose works were lauded in England,—who moreover really had certain talents for the stage, especially that of producing theatrical effect, having himself been in the habit of acting at private theatres, thereby making up in a measure for the want of the advantage posset by

the Greek dramatists and by Shakspeare, of studying their art practically, as well as theoretically,—tried in like manner to make up for his want of creative Imagination, by dressing his tragedies according to the newest, most fashionable receipts of dramatic cookery. His art was *ostentare artem*, through fear lest we might not discover it without. There is no under-current in his writings, no secret working of passion: every vein and nerve and muscle is laid bare, as in an anatomy, and accompanied with a comment on its peculiar excellences. His personages are never content with being what they are, and acting accordingly: they are continually telling you what they are; and their morbid self-consciousness preys upon them so, that they can hardly talk or think of anything, except their own prodigious selves.

Thus in his tragedy, called *Guilt*, which turns in great part upon the contrast between the Norwegian character and the Spanish, a Norwegian maiden comes in, saying, *I am a Norwegian maiden; and Norwegian maidens are very wonderful creatures.* A Spanish woman exclaims, *I am a Spanish woman; and Spanish women are very wonderful creatures.* Even a boy is stript of his blessed privilege of unconscious innocence, and tells us how unconscious and innocent he is. To crown the whole, the hero enters, and says: *I am the most wonderful being of all: for I am a Norwegian; and Norwegians are wonderful beings: and I am also a Spaniard; and Spaniards also are*

*wonderful beings. The North and the South have committed adultery within me. Out on them! there's death in their kiss. I am a riddle to myself. Pole and Pole unite in me. I combine fire and water, earth and heaven, God and the devil.* The last sentences are translated literally from the original. They were meant to be very grand, and probably excited shouts of applause: yet they are a piece of turgid falsetto.

In a certain sense indeed there is a truth in these lines, so far as they set forth the inherent discords of our nature, a truth to which all history bears witness, and which comes out more forcibly at times and in characters of demoniacal power. But it is as contrary to nature for a man to anatomize his heart and soul thus, as it would be to make him dissect his own body. The blunder lies in representing a person as speaking of himself in the same way in which a dispassionate observer might speak of him. It is much as if one were to versify the analytical and rhetorical accounts, which critics have given of Shakspeare's characters, and then to put them into the mouths of Macbeth, Othello, Lear, nay, of Juliet, Imogen, Ophelia, and even of the child, Arthur.

Yet in Hamlet himself, that personification of human nature brooding over its own weaknesses and corruptions, that only philosopher, with one exception, whom Poetry has been able to create, how different are all the reflexions! which moreover come forward mainly in his soliloquies; whereas

Muellner's hero raves out his self-analysis in the ears of another, a woman, his own sister, the very sight of whom should have made him fold up the poisoned leaves of his heart. The individual, personal application of Hamlet's reflexions is either swallowed up in the general confession of the frailty of human nature ; or else they are the self-reproaches and self-stimulants of irresolute weakness, the foam which the sea leaves behind on the sands, when it sinks back into its own abysmal depths, and the dissonant muttering of the waves, that have been vainly lashing an immovable rock. So that they arise naturally, and almost necessarily, out of his situation, out of the conflict with the pressure of events, which he shrinks from encountering, and thus are altogether different from the practice of modern writers, who make a man stand up in cold blood, and recite a dissertation upon himself, carried on, with the interposition of divers similar dissertations recited by others, through the course of five acts.

To make the difference more conspicuous, it would be instructive to see a soliloquy for Hamlet written by one of these modern playwrights. How thickly would it be deckt out with all manner of floscules ! for the same reason for which a tragedy-queen wears many more diamonds than a real one. The following might serve as a sample.

I am a prince. A prince a sceptre bears.  
Sceptres are golden. Gold is flexible.  
Therefore am I as flexible as gold.

'Tis strange! 'Tis passing strange! I'm a strange being!  
 None e'er was stranger. I was born in Denmark;  
 In Wittenberg I studied. Wittenberg!  
 Why Wittenberg is set amid the sands  
 Of Northern Germany. So stood Palmyra  
 Amid the sands of Syria. Sand! Sand! Sand!  
 I wonder how 'twas possible for Sand  
 To murder Kotzebue. Sand flies round and round;  
 And every puff of wind will change its form.  
 Thus every puff of wind will change my mind.  
 Ay, that vile sand I breathed at Wittenberg  
 Has rusht into my soul; and there it whirls  
 And whirls about, just like the foam that flies  
 From water-wheels. It almost chokes me up.  
 So did it Babylon. That baby loon!  
 To build his city in the midst of sands!  
 But that was in the babyhood of man.  
 Now we are older grown, and wiser too.  
 I live in Copenhagen by the sea.  
 That is the home of every Dane. The sea!  
 But that too waves and wavers. So do I.  
 I am the sea. But I am golden too,  
 And sandy too. O what a marvel 's this!  
 I am a golden, sandy sea. Prodigious!  
 Ay, ay! There are more things in heaven and earth,  
 Than are dreamt of in our Philosophy.

Nor are these aberrations and extravagances,  
 these preposterous inversions of the processes of  
 the Imagination, trying to educe the concrete out of  
 a medley of abstractions, confined to Germany.  
 They may be commoner there, because the Ger-  
 man mind has been busier in philosophical  
 and esthetical speculations: and when they are  
 found in our own poetry, there may be more  
 of genuine poetical substance to sustain them.

But I have cited some passages in which the reflective spirit has operated injuriously on Wordsworth ; and, if we look into Lord Byron's works, we shall not have to go far before we light on examples of similar errors. For he is eminently the prince of egotists ; and, instead of representing characters, he describes them, by verifying his own reflexions and meditations about them. It has been asserted indeed by a celebrated critic, "that Lord Byron's genius is essentially dramatic." But this assertion merely illustrates the danger of meddling with hard words. For no poet, not even Wordsworth or Milton, was more unfitted by the character of his mind for genuine dramatic composition. He can however write fine, sounding lines in abundance, where self-exaltation assumes the language of self-reproach, and a man magnifies himself by speaking with bitter scorn of all things. Such are the following from the opening soliloquy in *Manfred*.

Philosophy, and science, and the springs  
Of wonder, and the wisdom of the world,  
I have essayed ; and in my mind there is  
A power to make these subject to itself :  
But they avail not. I have done men good ;  
And I have met with good even among men :  
But this availed not. I have had my foes ;  
And none have baffled, many fallen before me :  
But this availed not. Good or evil, life,  
Powers, passions, all I see in other beings,  
Have been to me as rain unto the sands,  
Since that all-nameless hour. I have no dread,

And feel the curse to have no natural fear,  
Nor fluttering throb, that beats with hopes or wishes,  
Or lurking love of something on the earth.

Or look at this speech in Manfred's conversation  
with the Abbot :

My nature was averse from life,  
And yet not cruel; for I would not make,  
But find a desolation :—like the wind,  
The red-hot breath of the most lone simoom,  
Which dwells but in the desert, and sweeps o'er  
The barren sands which bear no shrubs to blast,  
And revels o'er their wild and arid waves,  
And seeketh not, so that it is not sought,  
But being met is deadly ; such hath been  
The course of my existence.

Now if in these lines *he* and *his* be substituted for *I* and *my*, and they be read as a description of some third person, they may perhaps be grand, as the author meant that they should be. But at present they are altogether false, and therefore unpoetical. Indeed it may be laid down as an axiom, that, whenever the personal pronouns can be interchanged in any passage without injury to the poetry, the poetry must be spurious. For no human being ever thought or spoke of himself, as a third person would describe him. Yet, such is the intelligence shewn in our ordinary criticism, these very passages have been cited as examples of Lord Byron's dramatic genius. u.

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There is a profound knowledge of human nature in those lines which Shelley puts into Orsino's mouth, in *the Cenci* (Act II. Sc. II.).

It is a trick of this same family  
 To analyse their own and other minds.  
 Such self-anatomy shall teach the will  
 Dangerous secrets: for it tempts our powers,  
 Knowing what must be thought, and may be done,  
 Into the depth of darkest purposes.

This is not at variance with what has been said in these last pages, but on the contrary confirms it. Self-anatomy is not an impossible act. It belongs however to a morbid state. When in health, we do not feel our own feelings, any more than we feel our limbs, or see our eyes, but their objects, the objects on which they were designed to act. On the other hand, when any part of the body becomes disordered, we feel it, the more so, the more violent the disorder is. The same thing happens in an unhealthy state of heart and mind, when the living communion with their objects is blockt up and cut off, and the blood is thrown back upon the heart, and our sight is filled with delusive spectra. If the Will gives itself up to work evil, the Conscience ever and anon lifts up its reproachful voice, and smites with its avenging sting; whereupon the Will commands the Understanding to lull or stifle the Conscience with its sophistries, and to prove that our moral nature is a mere delusion. Hence Shakspeare has made his worst characters, Edmund, Iago, Richard, all more

or less self-reflective. Even in such characters however, it is necessary to track the footsteps of Nature with the utmost care, in order to avoid substituting a shameless, fiendish profession of wickedness, for the jugglings whereby the remaining shreds of our moral being would fain justify or palliate its aberrations. *Evil, be thou my Good!* is a cry that could never have come from human lips. They always modify and mitigate it into *Evil, thou art my Good.* Thus they shake off the responsibility of making it so, and impute the sin of their will to their nature or their circumstances. Yet in nothing have the writers of spurious tragedies oftener gone wrong, than in their way of making their villains proclaim and boast of their villainy. Even poets of considerable dramatic genius have at times erred grievously in this respect, especially during the immaturity of their genius: witness the soliloquies of Francis Moor in Schiller's Titanic first-birth. Slow too and reluctant as I am to think that anything can be erroneous in Shakspeare, whom Nature had wedded, so to say, for better, for worse, and whom she admitted into all the hidden recesses of her heart, still I cannot help thinking that even he, notwithstanding the firm grasp with which he is wont to hold the reins of his solar chariot, as it circles the world, beholding and bringing out every form of life in it, has somewhat exaggerated the diabolical element in the soliloquies of Richard the Third. I refer especially to those terrific lines just after the murder of Henry the Sixth.

Down, down, to hell, and say, I sent thee thither,  
*I, that have neither pity, love, nor fear.*  
 Indeed 'tis true, that Henry told me of :  
 For I have often heard my mother say,  
 I came into the world with my legs forward.  
 Had I not reason, think ye, to make haste,  
 And seek their ruin that usurpt our right ?  
 The midwife wondered, and the women cried,  
 O, Jesus bless us ! he is born with teeth.  
 And so I was ; *which plainly signified,*  
*That I should snarl, and bite, and play the dog.*  
*Then, since the heavens have shaped my body so,*  
*Let hell make crookt my mind, to answer it.*  
 I had no father ; I am like no father :  
 I have no brother ; I am like no brother :  
*And this word, Love, which greybeards call divine,*  
*Be resident in men like one another,*  
*And not in me : I am myself alone.*

Of a like character are those lines in the opening  
 soliloquy of the play called by his name :

But I, that am not shaped for sportive tricks,  
 Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass,—  
 I that am curtailed of this fair proportion,  
 Cheated of feature by dissembling Nature,  
 Deformed, unfinish't, sent before my time  
 Into this breathing world, scarce half made up,  
 And that so lamely and unfashionably,  
 That dogs bark at me, as I halt by them ;—  
 Why I, in this weak piping time of peace,  
 Have no delight to pass away the time,  
 Unless to spy my shadow in the sun,  
 And descant on my own deformity.  
 And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover,  
 To entertain these fair, well-spoken days,  
*I am determin'd to prove a villain,*  
 And hate the idle pleasures of these days.

How different is this bold avowal of audacious, reckless wickedness, from Edmund's self-justification !

Why bastard ? wherefore base ?  
When my dimensions are as well compact,  
*My mind as generous*, and my shape as true,  
As honest madam's issue.

How different too is Iago's speech !

*And what 's he then, that says, I play the villain ?  
When this advice is free I give, and honest,  
Probable to thinking, and indeed the course  
To win the Moor again. For 'tis most easy  
The inclining Desdemona to subdue  
In any honest suit : she 's famed as fruitful  
As the free elements. And then for her  
To win the Moor,—were 't to renounce his baptism,  
All seals and symbols of redeemed sin,—  
His soul is so enfeathered to her love,  
That she may make, unmake, do what she list,  
Even as her appetite shall play the god  
With his weak function. How am I then a villain,  
To counsel Cassio to this parallel course,  
Directly to his good ?*

After which inimitable bitterness of mockery at all his victims, and at Reason itself, how awfully does that sudden flash of conscience rend asunder and consume the whole network of sophistry !

Divinity of hell !  
When devils will their blackest sins put on,  
They do suggest at first with heavenly shows,  
As I do now.

If we compare these speeches with Richard's,

and in like manner if we compare the way in which Iago's plot is first sown, and springs up and gradually grows and ripens in his brain, with Richard's downright enunciation of his projected series of crimes from the first, we may discern the contrast between the youth and the mature manhood of the mightiest intellect that ever lived upon earth, a contrast almost equally observable in the difference between the diction and metre of the two plays, and not unlike that between a great river rushing along turbidly in spring, bearing the freshly melted snows from Alpine mountains, with flakes of light scattered here and there over its surface, and the same river, when its waters have subsided into their autumnal tranquillity, and compose a vast mirror for the whole landscape around them, and for the sun and stars and sky and clouds overhead.

It is true, Shakspeare's youth was Herculean, was the youth of one who might have strangled the serpents in his cradle. There are several things in Richard's position, which justify a great difference in the representation of his inward being. His rank and station pampered a more audacious will. The civil wars had familiarized him with crimes of lawless violence, and with the wildest revolutions of fortune. Above all, his deformity, — which Shakspeare received from a tradition he did not think of questioning, and which he purposely brings forward so prominently in both the speeches quoted above, — seemed to separate and cut him off from

sympathy and communion with his kind, and to be a plea for thinking that, as he was a monster in body, he might also be a monster in heart and conduct. In fact it is a common result of a natural malformation to awaken and irritate a morbid self-consciousness, by making a person continually and painfully sensible of his inferiority to his fellows: and this was doubtless a main agent in perverting Lord Byron's character. Still I cannot but think that Shakspeare would have made a somewhat different use even of this motive, if he had rewritten the play, like King John, in the maturity of his intellect. Would not Richard then, like Edmund and Iago, have palliated and excused his crimes to himself, and sophisticated and played tricks with his conscience! Would he not have denied and avowed his wickedness, almost with the same breath? and made the ever-waxing darkness of his purposes, like that of night, at once conceal and betray their hideous enormity? At all events, since the justifications that may be alledged for Richard's bolder avowals of his wickedness, result from the peculiar idiosyncrasy of his position taken along with his physical frame, he is a most unsafe model for other poets to follow, though a very tempting one, especially to young poets, many of whom are glad to vent their feelings of the discord between their ardent fancies and the actual state of the world, in railing at human nature, and embodying its evils in some incarnate fiend. Besides the main

difficulties of dramatic poetry are smoothed down, when a writer can make his characters tell us how good and how bad he designs them to be. u.

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Some readers, who might otherwise incline to acknowledge the truth of the foregoing observations, may perhaps be perplexed by the thought, that the tenour of them seems scarcely consistent with that Christian principle, which makes self-examination a part of our duty. To this scruple I might reply, that *corruptio optimi fit pessima*; for this involves the true explanation of the difficulty. But the solution needs to be brought out more plainly.

Now it is quite true that one of the main effects produced by Christianity on our nature has been to call forth our conscience, and, along therewith, our self-consciousness, into far greater distinctness; which has gone on increasing with the progress of Christian thought. This however is only as the Law called forth the knowledge of sin. The Law called forth the knowledge of the sinfulness of the outward act, with the purpose of making us turn away from it, even in thought, to its opposite. The Gospel, completing the work of the Law, has called forth the knowledge of the sinfulness of our inward nature; not however to the end that we should brood over the contemplation of that sinfulness,—far less that we should resolve to abide and advance therein; but to the end that we should rise out of it, and turn away

from it, to the Redemption which has been wrought for us. To have aroused the consciousness of sin, without assuaging it by the glad tidings of Redemption, would have been to issue a sentence of madness against the whole human race. One cry of despair would have burst from every heart, as it was lasht by the stings of the Furies: *O wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of death?* And the echo from all the hollow caverns of earth and heaven and hell would only have answered, *Who?*

In truth, even in this form of self-consciousness, there is often a great deal of morbid exaggeration, of unhealthy, mischievous poring over and prying into the movements of our hearts and minds; which in the Romish Church has been stimulated feverishly by the deleterious practices of the confessional, and which taints many of the very best Romish devotional works. A vapid counterpart of this is also to be found in our modern sentimental religion. In the Apostles, on the other hand, there is nothing of the sort. Their life is hid with Christ in God. Their hearts and minds are filled with the thought and the love of Him who had redeemed them, and in whom they had found their true life, and with the work which they were to do in His service, for His glory, for the spreading of His kingdom. This too was one of the greatest and most blessed among the truths which Luther was especially ordained to reproclaim,—that we are not to spend our days in watching



our own vices, in gazing at our own sins, in stirring and raking up all the mud of our past lives; but to lift our thoughts from our own corrupt nature to Him who put on that nature in order to deliver it from its corruption, and to fix our contemplations and our affections on Him who came to clothe us in His perfect righteousness, and through whom and in whom, if we are united to Him by a living faith, we too become righteous. Thus, like the Apostle, are we to forget that which is behind, and to keep our eyes bent on the prize of our high calling, to which we are to press onward, and which we may attain, in Christ Jesus.

I cannot enter here into the questions, how far and what kinds of self-examination are necessary as remedial, medicinal measures, in consequence of our being already in so diseased a condition. These are questions of ascetic discipline, the answers to which will vary according to the exigences of each particular case, even as do the remedies prescribed by a wise physician for bodily ailments. I merely wish to shew that, in the Christian view of man, no less than in the natural, the healthy, normal state is not the subjective, but the objective, that in which, losing his own individual, insulated life, he finds it again in Christ, that in which he does not make himself the object of his contemplation and action, but directs them both steadily and continually toward the will and the glory of God.

Of course the actual changes which have thus

been wrought in human nature by the operation of Christianity, and which are not confined to its religious aspect, but pervade all its movements, will justify and necessitate a corresponding difference in the poetical representations of human characters. Still the poet will have to keep watch against excesses and aberrations in this respect; and this has not been done with sufficient vigilance, it seems to me, in the passages which I have found fault with.

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v.

The general opinion on the worth of an imaginative work may ultimately be right: immediately it is likely to be wrong; and this likelihood increases in proportion to the creative power manifested in it. The whole history of literature drives us to this conclusion. There have indeed been cases in which the calm judgement of posterity has confirmed the verdict pronounced by contemporaries: but, though the results have been the same, the way of arriving at them was different. What Jonson said of him, in whom, above all other men, the spirit of Poetry became incarnate, is true of Poetry itself: "it is not of an age, but for all time." In the very act of becoming an immanent power in the life of the world, it advances, as our common phrases imply, beyond its own age, and rises above it. Now, from the nature of man, there are always aspirations and yearnings in him, which soar beyond the ken of his understanding, and depths of thought and feeling, which strike down below it:

wherefore no age has ever been able to comprehend itself, even what it is, much less what it is striving after and tending to. A Thucydides or a Burke may discern some of the principles which are working and seething, and may guess at the consequences which are to be evolved out of them. But they who draw the car of Destiny cannot look back upon her: they are impelled onward and ever blindly onward by the throng pressing at their heels. Far less can any age comprehend what is beyond it and above it.

Besides much of the beauty in every great work of art must be latent. Like the Argive seer, *οὐ δοκεῖν ἄριστον, ἀλλ' εἶναι θέλει*. Such a work will be profound; and few can sound depth. It will be sublime; and few can scan highth. It will have a soul in it; and few eyes can pierce through the body. Thus the Greek epigram on the History of Thucydides,—

᾽Ω φίλος, εἰ σοφὸς εἶ, λάβε μ' ἐς χέρας. εἰ δὲ πέφυκας  
 Νῆϊς Μουσάων, ῥίψον ἄ μὴ νοεῖς.  
 Εἰμὶ γὰρ οὐ πάντεσσι βατός· παῦροι δ' ἀγάσαντο, —

may be regarded as more or less appropriate to every great work of art. So that Orator Puff's blunder, in spending as many words on a riband as a Raphael, did not lie solely in the superior merits of the latter, but also in the greater facility with which all the merits of the former were sure to be discerned. At the Exhibition of the King's pictures last year (in 1826), Grenet's Church, with its mere mechanical dexterity of perspective, had more

admirers, ten to one, than any of Rembrandt's wonderful masterpieces, more, fifty to one, than Venusti's picture of the Saviour at the foot of the Cross: for you will find fifty who will be delighted with an ingenious artifice, sooner than one who can understand art. Hence there is little surprising in being told that Sophocles was not so great a favorite on the Athenian stage as Euripides: what surprises me far more is, that any audience should ever have been found capable of deriving pleasure from the severe grandeur and chaste beauty of Sophocles. Nor is it surprising that Jonson and Fletcher should have been more admired than Shakspeare: the contrary would be surprising. Thus too, when one is told that Schiller must be a greater poet than Goethe, because he is more popular in Germany, one may reply, that, were he less popular, one might perhaps be readier to suppose that there may be something more in him, than what thrusts itself so prominently on the public view.

We are deaf, it is said, to the music of the spheres, owing to the narrowness and dimness and dulness of our auditory organs. So is it with what is grandest and loveliest in poetry. Few admire it, because few have perceptions capacious and quick and strong enough to feel it. Lessing has said (vol. xxvi. p. 36): "The true judges of poetry are at all times, in all countries, quite as rare as true poets themselves are." Thus among my own friends, although I feel pride in reckoning up many of surpassing intellectual powers, I can

hardly bethink myself of more than one possessing that calmness of contemplative thought, that insight into the principles and laws of the Imagination, that familiarity with the forms under which in various ages it has manifested itself, that happy temperature of activity not too restless or vehement, with a passiveness ready to receive the exact stamp and impression which the poet purport to produce, and the other qualities requisite to fit a person for pronouncing intelligently and justly on questions of taste.\*

How then do great works ever become popular?

In the strict sense they very seldom do. They never can be rightly appreciated by the bulk of mankind, because they can never be fully understood by them. No author, I have remarkt before, has been more inadequately understood than Shakspeare. But who, among the authors that make or mark a great epoch in the history of thought, imaginative or reflective, has fared better? Has Plato? or Sophocles? or Dante? or Bacon? or Behmen? or Leibnitz? or Kant? Their names have indeed been extolled; but for the chief part of those who have extolled them, they might as well have written in an unknown tongue. Look only at Homer, whom one might deem of all poets the most easily intelligible. Yet how the Greek

\* This was written in 1826. Since then the opinion here express has been justified by the *Essay on the Irony of Sophocles*, which has been termed the most exquisite piece of criticism in the English language.

critics misunderstood him ! who found everything in him except a poet. How must Virgil have misunderstood him, when he conceived himself to be writing a poem like the *Iliad* ! How must those persons have misunderstood him, who have pretended to draw certain irrefragable laws of epic poetry from his works ! laws which are as applicable to them, as the rules of carpet-making are to the side of a hill in its vernal glory. How must Cowper have misunderstood him, when he congealed him ! and Pope, when he bottled up his streaming waters in couplets, and coloured them till they were as gaudy as a druggist's window ! Here, as in numberless instances, we see how, as Goethe says so truly, every reader

Reads himself out of the book that he reads, nay, has he a strong mind,

Reads himself into the book, and amalgams his thoughts with the author's.

Nevertheless in the course of time the judgement of the intelligent few determines the judgement of the unintelligent many. Public opinion flows through the present as through a marsh, scattering itself in a multitude of little brooks, taking any casual direction, and often stagnating sleepily ; until the more vigorous and active have gone before, and cut and embanked a channel, along which it may follow them. Thus on the main it has one voice for the past ; and that voice is the voice of the judicious : but it has an endless consort, or rather dissonance of voices for the present ; and

amid a mob the wisest are not likely to be the loudest. For they have the happy feeling that Time is their ally ; and they know that hurrying impedes, oftener than it accelerates. At length however, when people are persuaded that they ought to like a book, they are not slow in finding out something to like in it. Our perceptions are tractable and ductile enough, if we earnestly desire that they should be so. u.

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Sophocles is the summit of Greek art. But one must have scaled many a steep, before one can estimate his highth. It is owing to his classical perfection, that he has generally been the least admired of the great ancient poets: for little of his beauty is discernible by a mind that is not deeply principled and imbued with the spirit of antiquity. The overpowering grandeur of Eschylus has more of that which bursts through every conventional barrier, and rushes at once to the innermost heart of man. Homer lived before the Greeks were cut off so abruptly from other nations, and their peculiar qualities were brought out, in part through the influences of their country, which tended to break them up into small states, and thus gave a political importance to each individual citizen,—in part through the political institutions which sprang out of these causes, and naturally became more and more democratical,—in part through the workings, moral and intellectual, of Commerce, and of that freedom which all these circumstances combined to

foster. Hence his national peculiarities are not so definitely marked. In many respects he nearly resembles those bards in other countries, who have lived in a like state of society. Therefore, as a child is always at home wherever he may chance to be, so is Homer in all countries: and thus on the whole he perhaps is the ancient poet who has found the most favour with the moderns, grossly as, we have just seen, even he has often been misunderstood. Next to him in popularity, if I mistake not, come Euripides and Ovid; who have been fondled in consequence of their being infected with several modern epidemic vices of style. They have nothing spiritual, nothing ideal, nothing mysterious. All that is valuable in them is spread out on the surface, often thinly as gold leaf. They are full of glittering points. Some of their gems are true; and few persons have eyes to distinguish the false. They have great rhetorical pathos; and in poetry as in life clamorous importunity will awaken more general sympathy than silent distress. They are skilful in giving characteristic touches, rather than in representing characters; and the former please everybody, while it requires a considerable reach of imagination to apprehend and estimate the latter. In fine they are immoral, and talk morality. U.

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When a man says he sees nothing in a book, he very often means that he does not see himself in it: which, if it is not a comedy or a satire, is likely enough.

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What a person praises is perhaps a surer standard, even than what he condemns, of his character, information, and abilities. No wonder then that in this prudent country most people are so shy of praising anything. \_\_\_\_\_

Most painters have painted themselves. So have most poets; not so palpably indeed and confessedly, but still more assiduously. Some have done nothing else. \_\_\_\_\_ u.

Many persons carry about their characters in their hands; not a few under their feet. \_\_\_\_\_ u.

What a lucky fellow he would be, who could invent a beautifying glass! How customers would rush to him! A royal funeral would be nothing to it. Nobody would stay away, except the two extremes, those who were satisfied with themselves through their vanity, and those who were contented in their humility. At present one is forced to take up with one's eyes; and they, spiteful creatures, won't always beautify quite enough. \_\_\_\_\_ u.

Everybody has his own theatre, in which he is manager, actor, prompter, playwright, sceneshifter, boxkeeper, doorkeeper, all in one, and audience into the bargain. \_\_\_\_\_ u.

A great talker ought to be affable. Else how can he look to find others so? Yet his besetting temptation is to speak, rather than to hear. \_\_\_\_\_ u.

C'est un grand malheur qu'on ne peut se battre  
qu'en combattant. u.

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Nothing is accounted so proper in England as  
property.

En France le propre est la propriété. u.

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I have mentioned individuality of character above (vol. i. p. 138) among the distinctive qualities of the English. Not however that it is peculiarly ours, but common to us with the other nations of the Teutonic race, between whom and those nations in whose character, as in their language, the Latin blood is predominant, there is a remarkable contrast in this respect. Landor, having resided many years among the latter, could not fail to notice this. "I have often observed more variety (he makes Puntomichino say) in a single English household, than I believe to exist in all Italy." Solger (*Briefwechsel*, p. 82) has a like remark with reference to the French: "A certain general outward culture makes them all know how to keep in their station, each doing just as his neighbours do; so that one seldom meets among them with that interesting and instructive originality, which in other nations is so often found in the lower orders. In France all classes have much the same sort of education, a superficial one enough, it is true; but hence even the meanest are able to hold up their heads."

Talk to a dozen Englishmen on any subject:

there will be something peculiar and characteristic in the remarks of each. Talk to a dozen Frenchmen: they will all make the very same remark, and almost in the same words. Nor is this merely a delusive appearance, occasioned by a stranger's inattention to the minuter shades of difference, as in a flock of sheep an inexperienced eye will not discern one from another. It is that the generic and specific qualities are proportionably stronger in them, that they all tread in the same sheeptrack, that they all follow their noses, and that their noses, like those of cattle when a storm is coming on, all point the same way. A traveler cannot go far in the country, but something will be said about passports. I have heard scores of people talk of them at different times. Of course they all thought them excellent things: this belongs to their national vanity. What surprised me was, that they every one thought them excellent things for the self-same reason,—because they prevent thieves and murderers from escaping . . . a reason learnt by rote, concerning which they had never thought of asking whether such was indeed the fact.

Let me relate another instance in point. I happened to be in Paris at the time of the great eclipse in 1820, and was watching it from the gardens of the Tuileries. Several voices, out of a knot of persons near me, cried out one after the other, *Ah, comme c'est drôle! Regardez, comme c'est drôle.* My own feelings not being exactly

in this key, I walkt away, but in vain. Go whither I would, the same sounds haunted me. Old men and children, young men and maidens, all joined in the same cuckoo cry: *C'est bien drôle ! Regardez, comme c'est drôle. Ah, comme c'est drôle.* Paris had tongues enough ; for these are never scarce there. But it seemed only to have a single mind : and this mind, even under the aspect of that portent which "perplexes nations," could not contain or give utterance to more than one thought or feeling, that what they saw was *bien drôle.* . u.

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The monotonousness of French versification is only a type of that which pervades the national character, and herewith, of necessity, the representative and exponent of that character, their literature, since the age of Louis the Fourteenth. But this ready suppression, or rather imperfect development, of those features which constitute individuality of character, is common, as I remarkt before, more or less to all the nations of the Latin stock : and it is scarcely less noticeable in the Romans, than in the rest. Indeed this is one main difference, to which most of the others are referable, between the literature of the Greeks and that of the Romans. Hence, for instance, the Greeks, like ourselves and the Germans, had dramatic poetry, the essence of which lies in the revelation of the inner man ; whereas the Roman drama, at least in its higher departments, was an alien growth. Moreover in

Greek literature every author is himself, and has distinctive qualities whereby you may recognise him. But every Roman writer, as Frederic Schlegel has justly observed, "is in the first place a Roman, and next a Roman of a particular age." That portion of him which is peculiarly his own, is ever the least. *Pars minima ipse sui*. You may find page after page in Tacitus and Seneca and the elder Pliny, which, but for the difference of subject, might have been composed by any one of the three: and if Lucan had not written in verse, the trio might have been a quartett. u.

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The Romans had no love of Beauty, like the Greeks. They held no communion with Nature, like the Germans. Their one idea was Rome, not ancient, fabulous, poetical Rome, but Rome warring and conquering, and *orbis terrarum domina*. S. P. Q. R. is inscribed on almost every page of their literature. With the Greeks all foreign nations were *βάρβαροι*, outcasts from the precincts of the Muses. To the Roman every stranger was a *hostis*, until he became a slave. Only compare the Olympic with the gladiatorial games. The object of the former was to do homage to Nature, and to exalt and glorify her excellent gifts; that of the latter to appease the thirst for blood, when it was no longer quenched in the blood of foes. None but a Greek was deemed worthy of being admitted to the first: but a Roman would have thought himself degraded by a mimic combat, in which the

victory lay rather with the animal, than with the intellectual part of man. He left such sport to his jesters, slaves, and wild beasts. To him a triumph was the ideal and sum total of happiness: and verily it was something grand. u.

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Milton has been compared to Raphael. He is much more like Michaelangelo. Michaelangelo is the painter of the Old Testament, Raphael of the New. Now Milton, as Wordsworth has said of him, was a Hebrew in soul. He was grand, severe, austere. He loved to deal with the primeval, elementary forms both of inanimate nature and of human, before the manifold, ever multiplying combinations of thought and feeling had shaped themselves into the multifarious complexities of human character. Both Samson and Comus are equally remote from the realities of modern humanity. He would have been a noble prophet. Among the Greeks, his imagination, like that of Eschylus, would have dwelt among the older gods. He wants the gentleness of Christian love, of that feeling to which the least thing is precious, as springing from God, and claiming kindred with man.

Where to find a parallel for Raphael in the modern world, I know not. Sophocles, among poets, most resembles him. In knowledge of the diversities of human character, he comes nearer than any other painter to him, who is unapproachably and unapproachable, Shakspeare; and yet two worlds, that of Humour, and that of Passion,

separate them. In exquisiteness of art, Goethe might be compared to him. But neither he nor Shakspeare has Raphael's deep Christian feeling. And then there is such a peculiar glow and blush of beauty in his works : whithersoever he comes, he sheds beauty from his wings.

Why did he die so early? Because morning cannot last till noon, nor spring through summer. Early too as it was, he had lived through two stages of his art, and had carried both to their highest perfection. This rapid progressiveness of mind he also had in common with Shakspeare and Goethe, and with few others. u.

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The readers of the Giaour will remember the narrow arch, over which the faithful are to enter into Paradise. In fact this arch was the edge of the sword, or rather of the arched scimitar. Hereby, if they wielded it bravely and murderously, the Mussulmen thought they should attain to that Garden of Bliss. Hence too did they deem it their duty to drive all men thither, even along that narrow and perilous bridge ; far more excusable in so doing, than those who have used like murderous weapons against their Christian brethren, in the belief that they were casting them, not into heaven, but into hell. Even in minor matters the sword is a perilous instrument whereby to seek one's aim. Compulsion is not, and never can be conviction. They exclude each other. u.

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Musicians, at least dilettanti ones, are apt to complain of those who *encore* a tune, as having no true feeling for the art. It should be remembered however, that the peculiarity of music is, that its parts can never be perceived contemporaneously, but only in succession. Yet no work of art can be understood, unless we have conceived the idea of it as a whole, and can discern the relations of its parts to each other as members of that whole. To judge of a picture, a statue, a building, we look at it again and again, both in its unity and in its details. So too do we treat a poem, which combines the objective permanence of the last-mentioned arts, with the successive development belonging to music. But until we know a piece of music, until we have heard it through already, it is scarcely possible for any ear to understand it. The sturdiest asserter of the organic unity of works of art will not pretend that he could construct a play of Shakspeare or of Sophocles out of a single scene, or even that he could construct a single speech out of the preceding ones; although, when he has read and carefully examined it, he may maintain that all its parts hang together by a sort of inherent, inviolable necessity. The habit of lavishing all one's admiration on striking parts, independently of their relation to the whole, does indeed betoken a want of imaginative perception, and of proper esthetical culture. In true works of art too the beauty of the parts is raised to a higher power by the living idea which



pervades the whole, as the physical beauty of Raphael's Virgins is by their relation to their Divine Child. But for that very reason do we gaze on them with greater intentness, and return to them again and again. Nay, does not Nature herself teach us to *encore* tunes? Her songsters repeat their songs over and over, with endless iteration. v.

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Wisdom is Alchemy. Else it could not be Wisdom. This is its unfailing characteristic, that it "finds good in everything," that it renders all things more precious. In this respect also does it renew the spirit of childhood within us: while foolishness hardens our hearts, and narrows our thoughts, it makes us feel a childlike curiosity and a childlike interest about all things. When our view is confined to ourselves, nothing is of value, except what ministers in one way or other to our own personal gratification: but in proportion as it widens, our sympathies increase and multiply: and when we have learnt to look on all things as God's works, then, as His works, they are all endeared to us.

Hence nothing can be further from true wisdom, than the mask of it assumed by men of the world, who affect a cold indifference about whatever does not belong to their own immediate circle of interests or pleasures. v.

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It were much to be wisht that some philosophical

scholar would explain the practical influence of religion in the ancient world. Much has been done of late for ancient mythology, which itself, until the time of Voss, was little better than a confused, tangled mass. Greek and Roman fables of all ages and sexes were jumbled together indiscriminately, with an interloper here and there from Egypt, or from the East; and, whether found in Homer or in Tzetzes, they were all supposed to belong to the same whole. Voss, not John Gerard, but John Henry, did a good service in trying to bring some sort of order and distinctness into this medley. But he mostly left out of sight, that one of the chief elements in mythology is the religious. His imagination too was rather that of a kitchen-garden, than either of a flower-garden, or a forest: his favorite flowers were cauliflowers. Since his days there have been many valuable contributions toward the history and genesis of mythology by Welcker, Ottfried Mueller, Buttmann, and others; though the master mind that is to discern and unfold the organic idea is still wanting.

Mythology however is not Religion. It may rather be regarded as the ancient substitute, the poetical counterpart, for dogmatic theology. In addition to this, we require to know what was the Religion of the ancients, what influence Religion exercised over their feelings, over their intellect, over their will, over their views of life, and their actions. This too must be a historical work, dis-

tinguishing what belongs to different ages, giving us fragmentary representations where nothing more is discoverable, and carefully eschewing the attempt to complete and restore the fragments of one age by pieces belonging to another. Here also we shall find progressive stages, faith, superstition, scepticism, secret and open unbelief, which slid or rolled back into new forms of arbitrary superstition. u.

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Many learned men, Grotius, for instance, and Wetstein, have taken pains to illustrate the New Testament by quoting all the passages they could collect from the writers of classical antiquity, expressing sentiments in any way analogous to the doctrines and precepts of the Gospel. This some persons regard as a disparagement to the honour of the Gospel, which they would fain suppose to have come down all at once from heaven, like a meteoric stone from a volcano in the moon, consisting of elements wholly different from anything found upon earth. But surely it is no disparagement to the wisdom of God, or to the dignity of Reason, that the development of Reason should be preceded by corresponding instincts, and that something analogous to it should be found even in inferior animals. It is no disparagement to the sun, that he should be preceded by the dawn. On the contrary this is his glory, as it was also that of the Messiah, that, in the words with which Milton describes His approach to battle, "far off His coming

shone." If there had been no instincts in man leading him to Christianity, no yearnings and cravings, no stings of conscience and aspirations, for it to quiet and satisfy, it would have been no religion for man. Therefore, instead of shrinking from the notion that anything at all similar to any of the doctrines of Christianity may be found in heathen forms of religion, let us seek out all such resemblances diligently, giving thanks to God that He has never left Himself wholly without a witness. When we have found them all, they will only be single rays darting up here and there, forerunners of the sunrise. Subtract the whole amount of them from the Gospel, and quite enough will remain to bless God for, even the whole Gospel.

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u.

Everybody knows and loves the beautiful story of the dog Argus, who just lives through the term of his master's absence, and sees him return to his home, and recognises him, and rejoicing in the sight dies. Beautiful too as the story is in itself, it has a still deeper allegorical interest. For how many Arguses have there been, how many will there be hereafter, the course of whose years has been so ordered, that they will have just lived to see their Lord come and take possession of His home, and in their joy at the blissful sight have departed! How many such spirits, like Simeon's, will swell the praises of Him who spared them that He might save them.

When watching by a deathbed, I have heard the cock crow as a signal for the spirit to take its flight from this world. This, I believe, is a common hour for such a journey. It is a comfortable thought, to regard the sufferer as having past through the night, and lived to see the dawn of an eternal day. Perhaps some thought of this kind fitted through the mind of Socrates, when he directed his sacrifice to Esculapius. Mr Evans has thought fit, in his life of Justin Martyr, when comparing the end of Justin with that of Socrates, to rebuke the latter as a "mere moralist," who "exhibited in his last words a trait of gross heathen superstition." Surely this is neither wise nor just. It was not owing to any fault in Socrates, that he was not a Christian, that he was "a mere moralist." On the contrary, it is a glorious thing that he should have been a moralist, and such a moralist, amid the darkness of Heathenism; and his glory is increased by his having recognised the duty of retaining a positive worship, while he saw its abuses, by his having been a philosopher, and yet not an unbeliever. I never could understand how it is necessary for the exaltation of Christianity to depreciate Socrates, any more than how it is requisite for the exaltation of the Creator to revile all the works of His Creation. u.

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The Rabbis tell, that, when Moses was about to lead the children of Israel out of Egypt, he remembered the promise made to Joseph, that his

bones should be carried with them, and buried in the Land of Promise. But not knowing how to make out which were the real bones of Joseph, among the many laid in the same sepulchre, he stood at the entrance of the sepulchre, and cried, *Bones of Joseph, come forth!* Whereupon the bones rose up and came toward him. With thankful rejoicing he gathered them together, and bore them away to the tents of Israel.

Strange as this fable may seem, it is the likeness of a stranger reality, which we may see in ourselves and in others. For when our spirits, being awakened to the sense of their misery and slavery, are roused by the voice of some great Deliverer to go forth into the land of freedom and hope, do we not often turn back to the sepulchres in the house of our bondage, in which from time to time we have laid up such parts of ourselves as seemed to belong to a former stage of being, expecting to find them living, and able to answer the voice which calls them to go forth with us? It is only by repeated disappointments, that we are taught no longer to seek the living among the dead, but to proceed on our pilgrimage, bearing the tokens of mortality along with us, in the assurance that, if we do bear them patiently and faithfully, until we come to the Land of Life, we may then deposit them in their true home, as precious seeds of immortality, which, though sown in corruption and dishonour and weakness, will be raised in incorruption and glory and power.

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When will the earth again hear the glad announcement, that *the people bring much more than enough for the service of the work, which the Lord commanded to make* (Exod. xxxvi. 5)? Yet, until we bring more than enough, at least until we are kindled by a spirit which will make us desire to do so, we shall never bring enough. And ought we not? Your economists will say *No*. They, who would think the sun a useful creature, if he would come down from the sky and light their fires, will gravely reprehend such wasteful extravagance. At the same time no doubt they will continually be guilty of far greater and more wasteful.

Among the numberless marvels, at which nobody marvels, few are more marvellous than the recklessness with which priceless gifts, intellectual and moral, are squandered and thrown away. Often have I gazed with wonder at the prodigality displayed by Nature in the cistus, which unfolds hundreds or thousands of its white starry blossoms morning after morning, to shine in the light of the sun for an hour or two, and then fall to the ground. But who, among the sons and daughters of men,—gifted with thoughts “which wander through eternity,” and with powers which have the godlike privilege of working good, and giving happiness,—who does not daily let thousands of these thoughts drop to the ground and rot? who does not continually leave his powers to drizzle in the mould of their own leaves? The imagination can

hardly conceive the heights of greatness and glory to which mankind would be raised, if all their thoughts and energies were to be animated with a living purpose,—or even those of a single people, or of the educated among a single people. But as in a forest of oaks, among the millions of acorns that fall every autumn, there may perhaps be one in a million that will grow up into a tree, somewhat in like manner fares it with the thoughts and feelings of man.

What then must be our confusion, when we see all these wasted thoughts and feelings rise up in the Judgement, and bear witness against us !

But how are we to know whether they are wasted or not ?

We have a simple, infallible test. Those which are laid up in heaven, those which are laid up in any heavenly work, those whereby we in any way carry on the work of God upon earth, are not wasted. Those which are laid up on earth, in any mere earthly work, in carrying out our own ends, or the ends of the Spirit of Evil, are heirs of death from the first, and can only rise out of it for a moment, to sink back into it for ever. u.

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People seem to think that love toward God must be something totally different in kind from the love which we feel toward our fellow-creatures, nay, as though it might exist without any feeling at all. If we believed that it ought to be the same feeling, which is excited by a living friend upon



earth, higher and purer, but not less real or warm, and if we tried our hearts, to see whether it is in us, by the same tests, there would be less self-deception on this point; and we should more easily be convinced that we must be wholly destitute of that, of which we can shew no lively token. a.

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The difference between heathen virtue and Christian goodness is the difference between oars and sails, or rather between galleys and ships.

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God never does things by halves. He never leaves any work unfinished: they are all wholes from the first. There are no demigods in Scripture. What is God is perfect God. What is man is mere man.

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The power of Faith will often shine forth the most, where the character is naturally weak. There is less to intercept and interfere with its workings. a.

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In the outward course of events we are often ready to see the hand of God in great things, but refuse to own it in small. In like manner it often happens that even they, who in heavy trials look wholly to God for strength and support, will in lesser matters trust to themselves. This is the source of the weakness and inconsistency betrayed by many, who yet on great occasions will act rightly. a.

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A blind man lets himself be led by a child. So must we be brought to feel, and to acknowledge to ourselves, that we are blind ; and then the time may come when a little Child shall lead us. . u.

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Love, it has been said, descends more abundantly than it ascends. The love of parents for their children has always been far more powerful than that of children for their parents : and who among the sons of men ever loved God with a thousandth part of the love which God has manifested to us? \_\_\_\_\_ ▲

By giving the glory of good actions to man, instead of to God, we weaken the power of example. If such or such a grace be the growth of such or such a character, our character, which is different, may be quite unable to attain to it. But if it be God's work in the soul, then on us too may He vouchsafe to bestow the same gift as on our neighbour. \_\_\_\_\_ α.

In darkness there is no choice. It is light, that enables us to see the differences between things : and it is Christ, that gives us light. \_\_\_\_\_

What is snow? Is it that the angels are shedding their feathers on the earth? Or is the sky showering its blossoms on the grave of the departed year? In it we see that, if the Earth is to be arrayed in this vesture of purity, her

raiment must descend on her from above. Alas too! we see in it, how soon that pure garment becomes spotted and sullied, how soon it mostly passes away. There is something in it singularly appropriate to the season of our Lord's Nativity, as Milton has so finely urged in his Hymn.

Nature in awe to Him  
 Had doft her gaudy trim,  
 With her great Master so to sympathize.  
 Only with speeches fair  
 She woos the gentle air  
 To hide her guilty front with innocent snow,  
 And on her naked shame,  
 Pollute with sinful blame,  
 The saintly veil of maiden white to throw ;  
 Confounded that her Maker's eyes  
 Should look so near upon her foul deformities.

For this, as well as for other reasons, it was happy that the Nativity was placed in December. u.

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*Written at Cambridge, January 15th, 1817.*

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Mighty Magician, Nature! I have heard  
 Of rapid transformations,—in my dreams  
 Seen how with births the mind at freedom teems,—  
 Seen how the trees their gallant vestments gird  
 In Spring's all-pregnant hour. But thou excellest  
 All fabled witchery, all the mind's quick brood ;  
 Even thyself thou dost surpass. What mood  
 Of wanton power is this, in which thou wellest

From thy impenetrable source, to pour  
A flood of milk-white splendour o'er the earth !  
Shedding such tranquil joy on Winter hoar,  
More pure than jocund Spring's exulting mirth,—  
A joy like that sweet calmness, which is sent  
To soothe the parting hour, where life is innocent.

Yes, lovely art thou, Nature, as the death  
Of righteous spirits. Yesternight I sate,  
And gazed, and all the scene was desolate.  
I wake, and all is changed,—as though the breath  
Of sleep had borne me to another world,  
The abode of innocence. Still a few flakes  
Drop, soft as falling stars. The sun now makes  
The dazzling snow more dazzling. Flowers up-curved  
In sleep thus swiftly scarce their bloom unfold,  
As these wide plains, so lately blank, disclose  
Their liliated face. The nun, whose streaming hair  
Is shorn, arrayed in spotless white behold :  
And Earth, when shorn of all her verdure, glows,  
In her bright veil, more saintly and more fair.

An hour have I been standing, and have gazed  
On this pure field of snow, smooth as a lake,  
When every wind is hushed; and no thought brake  
The trance of pleasure which the vision raised.  
Or, if a thought intruded, 'twas desire  
To lean my fevered cheek upon that breast  
Of virgin softness, and to taste the rest  
Its beauty seemed to promise. But the fire  
Would not more surely mock my erring grasp.  
No faith is found, no permanence, in form  
Of loveliness, not e'en in woman's. Love  
Must stand on some more stable base, must clasp  
Round objects more enduring, life more warm :  
His only food the soul, his only home above.

And now another thought intrudes to mar  
 The quiet of my musings, like a sound  
 Of thunder groaning through Night's still profound,  
 And lures me to wage reckless, impious war  
 Against the beauty of that silver main,—  
 To violate it with my feet, to tread  
 O'er all its charms, to stain its spotless bed,—  
 As some lewd wretch would a fair virgin stain.  
 Whence this wild, wayward fantasy? My soul  
 Would shrink with horror from such deed of shame.  
 Yet oft, amid our passions restless roll,  
 We love with wrong to dally without aim.\*  
 Alas! too soon the angel visitant  
 In Nature's course will leave our earthly haunt.      u.

January 17th, 1817.

I said, our angel visitant would flee  
 Too soon, unknowing with what truth I spoke.  
 For he is gone, already gone, like smoke  
 Of mists dissolving o'er the morning lea.  
 The faint star melts in daylight's dawning beam;  
 The thin cloud fades in ether's crystal sea;  
 Thoughts, feelings, words, spring forth, and cease to be:  
 And thou hast also vanisht, like a dream  
 Of Childhood come to cheer Earth's hoary age,  
 As though the aged Earth herself had dreamt,—  
 Viewless as hopes, fleeting as joys of youth;  
 And, bright as was thine air-born equipage,  
 It only served fallaciously to tempt  
 With visionary bliss, and bore no heart of truth.

How like to Joy in everything thou art!  
 Who camest to smile upon our wintry way,  
 Like in thy brightness, like in thy decay,  
 A moment radiant to delude the heart.

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\* "To dally with wrong that does no harm." Coleridge,  
*Christabel*.

And what of thee remains? Nought,—save the tear  
 In which thou diest away ;—save that the field  
 Has now relaxt its bosom late congealed,  
 As frozen hearts will in some short career  
 Of gladness open, looking for the spring,  
 And find it not, and sink back into ice ;—  
 Save that the brooks rush turbidly along,  
 Flooding their banks: thus, after reveling  
 In some brief rapturous dream of Paradise,  
 In passionate recoil our roused affections throng. u.

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The French rivers partake of the national character. Many of them look broad, grand, and imposing; but they have no depth. And the greatest river in the country, the Rhone, loses half its usefulness from the impetuosity of its current.

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True goodness is like the glowworm in this, that it shines most when no eyes, except those of heaven, are upon it. u.

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He who does evil that good may come, pays a toll to the devil to let him into heaven.

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Many Italian girls are said to profane the black veil by taking it against their will; and so do many English girls profane the white one.

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The bulk of men, in choosing a wife, look out for a *Fornarina*: a few in youth dream about finding a *Belle Jardinière*. u.

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We are so much the creatures of habit, that no great and sudden change can at first be altogether agreeable . . . unless it be here and there a honeymoon. A.

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Our appetites were given to us to preserve and to propagate life. We abuse them for its destruction. A.

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The mind is like a sheet of white paper in this, that the impressions it receives the oftenest, and retains the longest, are black ones.

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None but a fool is always right; and his right is the most unreasonable wrong.

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The difference between a speech and an essay should be something like that between a field of battle and a parade. U.

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What do our clergy lose by reading their sermons? They lose preaching, the preaching of the voice in many cases, the preaching of the eye almost always.

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Histories used often to be stories. The fashion now is to leave out the story. Our histories are stall-fed: the facts are absorbed by the reflexions, as the meat sometimes is by the fat. U.

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*C' est affreux comme il est pâle ! il devoit mettre*

*un peu de rouge*: cried a woman out of the crowd, as the First Consul rode by at a review in 1802. She thought a general ought to shew a little blood in his cheeks. One might say the same of sundry modern philosophical treatises. u.

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Some persons give one the notion of an abyss of shallowness. These terms may seem contradictory; but, like so many other contradictions, they have met and shaken hands in human nature. All such a man's thoughts, all his feelings, are superficial; yet, try him where you will, you cannot get to a firm footing. u.

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A historian needs a peculiar discernment for that which is important and essential and generative in human affairs. This is one of the main elements of the historical genius, as it is of the statesmanly. u.

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A statesman should have ears to hear the distant rustling of the wings of Time. Most people only catch sight of it, when it is flying away. When it is overhead, it darkens their view. u.

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*La France, c'est moi*, disoit Louis XIV. Mais son ambition n'étoit que mediocre: car, *le monde, c'est moi*, dit tout le monde. u.

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An epicure is said to have complained of a haunch of venison, as being too much for one, yet



not enough for two. Bonaparte thought the same of the world. What a great man he must have been then! To be sure: ambition is just as valid a proof of a strong and sound mind, as gormandizing is of a strong and sound body. u.

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The memory ought to be a store-room. Many turn theirs rather into a lumber-room. Nay, even stores grow mouldy and spoil, unless aired and used betimes; and then they too become lumber. u.

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At Havre I saw some faces from the country, which reminded me of our old monuments, and shewed me what the beauties must have been, that inspired the chivalry of our Henries and Edwards. They were long, almost to a fault, regular, tranquil, unobservant, with the clearest, freshest bloom. At Rouen these faces are no longer met with; and one finds oneself quite in France, the only country in civilized Europe where beauty is of the composite order, made up of prettiness, liveliness, sparkling eyes, artificial flowers, and a shawl,—the only region between Lapland and Morocco, where youth is without bloom, and age without dignity.

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Expression is action; beauty is repose.

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People say, St Peter's looks larger every time they see it. It does more. It seems to grow

larger, while the eye is fixt on it, even from the very door, and then expands, as you go forward, almost like our idea of God.

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*Hic Rhodus ; hic salta.* Do not wait for a change of outward circumstances ; but take your circumstances as they are, and make the best of them. This saying, which was meant to shame a braggart, will admit of a very different and profounder application. Goethe has changed the postulate of Archimedes, *Give me a standing-place, and I will move the world*, into the precept, *Make good thy standing-place, and move the world.* This is what he did throughout his life. So too was it that Luther moved the world, not by waiting for a favorable opportunity, but by doing his daily work, by doing God's will day by day, without thinking of looking beyond. We ought not to linger in inaction until Blucher comes up, but, the moment we catch sight of him in the distance, to rise and charge. Hercules must go to Atlas, and take his load off his shoulders perforce. This too is the meaning of the maxims in Wilhelm Meister : *Here, or nowhere, is Herrnhut : Here, or nowhere, is America.* We are not to keep on looking out for the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to believe firmly, and to acknowledge that it is come, and to live and act in that knowledge and assurance. Then will it indeed be come for us.

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The business of Philosophy is to circumnavigate human nature. Before we start, we are told that we shall find people who stand head-downwards, with their feet against ours. Very many won't believe this, and swear it must be all a hoax. Many take fright at the thought, and resolve to stay at home, where their peace will not be disturbed by such preposterous visions. Of those who set out, many stop half way, among the antipodes, and insist that standing head-downwards is the true posture of every reasonable being. It is only the favoured few, who are happy enough to complete the round, and to get home again; where they find everything just as they left it, save that henceforward they see it in its relations to the world, of which it forms a part. This too is the proof that they have indeed completed the round, their getting back to their home, and not feeling strange, but at home in it. u.

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The common notion of the Ideal, as exemplified more especially in the Painting of the last century, degrades it into a mere abstraction. It was assumed that, to raise an object into an ideal, you must get rid of everything individual about it. Whereas the true ideal is the individual, purified and potentiated, the individual freed from everything that is not individual in it, with all its parts pervaded and animated and harmonized by the spirit of life which flows from the centre.

This blunder however ran cheek by jowl with another, much like a pair of mules dragging the mind of man to the palace of the Omnipotent Nonentity. For the purport of the *Essay on the Human Understanding*, like that of its unacknowledged parent, and that of the numerous fry which sprang from it, was just the same, to maintain that we have no ideas, or, what amounts to the same thing, that our ideas are nothing more than abstractions, defecated by divers processes of the Understanding. Thus flame, for instance, is an abstraction from coal, a rose from a clod of earth, life from food, thought from sense, God from the world, which itself is only a prior abstraction from Chaos.

There is no hope of arriving at Truth, until we have learnt to acknowledge that the creatures of Space and Time are, as it were, so many chambers of the prisonhouse, in which the timeless, spaceless Ideas of the Eternal Mind are shut up, and that the utmost reach of Abstraction is, not to create, but to liberate, to give freedom and consciousness to that, which existed potentially and in embryo before. u.

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The word *encyclopedia*, which of late years has emerged from the study of the philosopher, and is trundled through every street and alley by such as go about teaching the rudiments of omniscience is an example how language is often far wiser than the people who make use of it. The

framers of words, as has been remarkt already (vol. i. p. 324), seem not seldom to have been gifted with something like a spirit of divination, which enabled them to see more than they distinctly perceived, to anticipate more than they knew. The royal stamp however, which was legible when the word was first issued, is often rubbed off; and it is worn down until one hardly knows what it was meant to be. The word *encyclopediæ* implies the unity and circularity of knowledge,—that it has one common central principle, which is at once constitutive and regulative: for there can be no circle without a centre; and it is by an act emanating from the centre, that the circle must be constructed. Moreover the name implies that in knowledge, as in being, there is not merely a progression, but a returning upon itself, that the alpha and omega coincide, and that the last and fullest truth must be the selfsame with the first germinal truth, that it must be, as it were, the full-grown oak which was latent in the acorn. Whereas our encyclopedias are neither circular, nor have they any centre. If they have the slightest claim to such a title, it can only be as round robins, all the sciences being tost together in them just as the whim of the alphabet has dictated. Indeed one might almost fancy that a new interpretation of the name had been devised, and that henceforward it was to mean, *all knowledge in a penny piece.*

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Dugald Stewart, in trying, at the beginning of his *Philosophy of the Human Mind*, to account for the prejudice commonly entertained in England against metaphysical speculations, urges "the frivolous and absurd discussions which abound in the writings of most metaphysical authors," as the justifying cause of this prejudice. Hereby, it appears shortly after, he especially means "the vain and unprofitable disquisitions of the Schoolmen." No doubt too he would subsequently have ranked "the vain and unprofitable disquisitions" of Kant and his successors along with them. Here we find a singular phenomenon in the history of causation. A cause, which acts attractively in its own neighbourhood, is assumed to act repulsively at a distance, both in time and in space. The Scholastic Philosophy, which so fascinated the thoughtful in its own age, the modern Philosophy of Germany, by which almost every intellect in that country has been more or less possessed and inspired, are the cause why we in England and in these days care so little about *the Philosophy of the Human Mind*. Conversely he may perhaps have consoled himself by arguing, that, as so few people in his days cared about *the Philosophy of the Human Mind*, multitudes, according to the law of compensation, will take the deepest interest in it hereafter; and that Reid's Philosophy is like a rocket, which has nothing very captivating while one holds it in one's hands, yet which will spread out into a stream of light, when it mounts to a distance. But O no!

These very speculations, which are condemned as "vain and unprofitable," are the speculations which come home to men's hearts and bosoms, and stir and kindle them. When we are told that we are bundles of habits, that our minds are sheets of white paper, that our thoughts are the extract of our sensations, that our conscience is a mere ledger of profit and loss, we turn to the practical business of life, as furnishing nobler subjects to occupy our time with. When we are told of our immortal, heavenborn nature, of the eternal laws of Reason, of Imagination, of Conscience, we start out of our torpours; and our hearts respond to the voice which calls us to such contemplations. Surely the countrymen of Locke and Hume and Hartley and Reid and Priestley and Paley might have nearer reasons for disregarding metaphysics, than those found in the subtilties of Scotus and Aquinas,—of whom, be it remembered, they knew nothing. u.

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A similar habit of thought led the same writer to say, in his *Dissertation on the Progress of Philosophy*, prefixt to the *Supplement to the Encyclopædia Britannica* (p. 25): "In modern times this influence of names is, comparatively speaking, at an end. The object of a public teacher is no longer to inculcate a particular system of dogmas, but to prepare his pupils for exercising their own judgements, to exhibit to them an outline of the different sciences, and to suggest subjects for their future examination." Now what is the

result of this change? That the pupil's mind is mazed and bewildered in a labyrinth of outlines,—that he knows not whither to turn his steps, or where to fix,—that the “future examination” is postponed *sine die*,—and that he leaves the university knowing a little about everything, but knowing nothing. No good was ever effected by filling a student's mind with outlines. It is to sow the husk, instead of the kernel.

“It was in consequence (Mr Stewart adds in a Note) of this mode of conducting education, by means of oral instruction alone, that the different sects of philosophy arose in ancient Greece.” One might have fancied that this instance would have sufficed to shew what a powerful influence may be exercised in this manner, by a teacher who knows how to act upon the minds and the affections of his hearers; wherefore the aim of a wise teacher should be to make the most of so useful an instrument, taking care to apply it to a right purpose. For what example does the history of literature present of a study flourishing as Philosophy did in Greece? In fact the worst thing about it was its over-luxuriance, which needed pruning and repressing. But no. The oracles of history, like all others, are two-edged. Let them speak as loudly and distinctly as they may, they are not to be understood, unless the hearer is willing to understand them. Where this will is wanting, a person may prefer the barrenness which has surrounded the Edinburgh metaphysical chair,



to the rich, ever-teeming tropic landscape of Greek Philosophy.

Cherish and foster that spirit of love, which lies wakeful, seeking what it may feed on, in every genial young mind: supply it with wholesome food: place an object before it worthy of its embraces: else it will try to appease its cravings by lawless indulgence. What your system may be, is of minor importance: in every one, as Leibnitz says, there is a sufficiency of truth: the tree must have life in it; or it could not stand. But you should plant the tree in the open plain, before your pupil's eyes: do not leave him to find out his way amid the windings of a tangled forest: let him see it distinctly, by itself; and no matter to what highth it may rise, his sight will overtop it; though, when it is surrounded by others, he cannot scan its dimensions. Plunge as deep as you will into the sea of knowledge; and do not fear his being unable or unwilling to follow you. The difficulty itself acts as a spur, For in this respect the mind is unlike a sword: it will be sharpened more effectively by a rugged rock, than by a whetstone. It springs up strongest and loftiest in craggy places, where it has had to commune and wage battle with the winds.

The cautious avoidance of difficult and doubtful points by a teacher in a university implies an ignorance of the susceptibility and subtilty of the youthful mind, whenever its feelings go along with its studies. He who is to win the race, must not

stop short of the goal, or go wide of it, through fear of running against it : *meta ferridis evitata rotis*,—this will be his aim. Would Columbus have discovered America, if he had been merely trained to fair-weather, pleasure-boat sailing? Could Shakspeare have written Lear and Hamlet, if some Scotch metaphysician had “prepared him for exercising his own judgement,” by “exhibiting an outline of the different sciences to him, and suggesting subjects for his future examination?” Concrete is said to be the best foundation for a house ; and it is by the observation of the concrete, that Nature trains the thinking powers of mankind. This her method then, we may be sure, will also be the most efficient with individuals.

Besides, this calling upon the young, at the very moment when they are first crossing the threshold of the temple of Knowledge, to sit in judgement on all the majestic forms that line the approach to its sanctuary, tends to pamper the vice, to which the young are especially prone, of an overweening, presumptuous vanity. Under judicious guidance they may be trained to love and reverence Truth, and all her highpriests : but more easily may they be led to despise the achievements of former times, and to set up their own age, and more especially themselves, as the highest objects of their worship. This too must needs be the result, when they are taught to give sentence on all the great men of old, to regard their own decision as supreme, and to pay homage solely to themselves. What will,

what must be the produce of such a system?  
 Will they not be like the Moralist in Wordsworth's  
*Poet's Epitaph*? who

has neither eyes nor ears,  
 Himself his world, and his own God:

One to whose smooth-rubbed soul can cling  
 Nor form, nor feeling, great or small,  
 A reasoning, self-sufficing thing,  
 An intellectual all-in-all.

U.

A strong and vivid imagination is scarcely less valuable to a philosopher, than to a poet. For the philosopher also needs that the objects of his contemplation should stand in their living fulness before him. The first requisite for discerning the relations and differences of things is to see the things themselves clearly and distinctly. From a want of this clear, distinct perception, the bulk of those who busy themselves in the construction of philosophical systems, are apt to substitute abstractions for realities; and on these abstractions they build their card-houses by the aid of logical formulæ. No wonder that such houses are soon overthrown, nay, that they topple ere long through their own insubstantiality.

Nevertheless an imaginative philosopher has continual occasion for exercising a more than ordinary selfdistrust. Among the manifold aspects of things, there are always some which will appear to accord with his prepossessions. They will seem in his eyes, under the colouring of these prepossessions,

to fit into his scheme, just as though it had been made for them. But whenever this is the case, we should be especially distrustful of appearances. For a *prima facie* view of things cannot be a scientifically or philosophically correct one. It will have more or less of subjective, relative truth, but can never be the truth itself, absolutely and objectively. Whatever our position may be, it cannot be the centre; and only from the centre can things be seen in their true bearings and relations. Yet, by an involuntary delusion, consequent upon our separation and estrangement from the real Centre of the Universe,—the Centre that does not abide in any single point, but at every point finds a Universe encircling it,—we cannot help assuming that we ourselves are that centre, and that the sun and moon and stars are merely revolving around us. v.

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*Prudens inquisitio dimidium scientiae.* The first step to self-knowledge is self-distrust. Nor can we attain to any kind of knowledge, except by a like process. We must fall on our knees at the threshold; or we shall not gain entrance into the temple. v.

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They who are in the habit of passing sentence upon books,—and what ignoramus in our days does not deem himself fully qualified for sitting in the seat of the scorner?—are apt to think that they have condemned a work irretrievably, when they

have pronounced it to be unintelligible. Unintelligible to whom? To themselves, the self-constituted judges. So that their sentence presumes their competency to pronounce it: and this, to every one save themselves, may be exceedingly questionable.

It is true, the very purpose for which a writer publishes his thoughts, is, that his readers should share them with him. Hence the primary requisite of a style is its intelligibility: that is to say, it must be capable of being understood. But intelligibility is a relative quality, varying with the capacity of the reader. The easiest book in a language is inaccessible to those who have never set foot within the pale of that language. The simplest elementary treatise in any science is obscure and perplexing, until we become familiar with the terminology of that science. Thus every writer is entitled to demand a certain amount of knowledge in those for whom he writes, and a certain degree of dexterity in using the implements of thought. In this respect too there should not only be milk for babes, but also strong meat for those who are of full age. It is absurd to lay down a rule, that every man's thoughts should move at the self-same pace, the measure of which we naturally take from our own. Indeed, if it fatigues us to keep up with one who walks faster, and steps out more widely than we are wont to do, there may also be an excess on the other side, which is more intolerably wearisome.

Of course a writer, who desires to be popular, will not put on seven-league boots, with which he would soon escape out of sight. Yet the highest authority has told us, that "the poet's eye Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven," taking the rapidity of vision as a type for that of the Imagination, which surely ought not to lag behind the fleetest of the senses. In logical processes indeed transitions are less sudden. If you wish to bind people with a chain of reasoning, you must not skip over too many of the links; or they may fail to perceive its cogency. Still it is wholesome and bracing for the mind, to have its faculties kept on the stretch. It is like the effect of a walk in Switzerland upon the body. Reading an Essay of Bacon's for instance, or a chapter of Aristotle or of Butler, if it be well and thoughtfully read, is much like climbing up a hill, and may do one the same sort of good. Set the tortoise to run against the hare; and, even if he does not overtake it, he will do more than he ever did previously, more than he would ever have thought himself capable of doing. Set the hare to run with the tortoise: he falls asleep.

Suppose a person to have studied Xenophon and Thucydides, till he has attained to the same thorough comprehension of them both; and this is so far from being an unwarrantable supposition, that the very difficulties of Thucydides tempt and stimulate an intelligent reader to form a more intimate acquaintance with him: which of the

two will have strengthened the student's mind the most? from which will he have derived the richest and most lasting treasures of thought? Who, that has made friends with Dante, has not had his intellect nerved and expanded by following the pilgrim through his triple world? and would Tasso have done as much for him? The labour itself, which must be spent in order to understand Sophocles or Shakspeare, to search out their hidden beauties, to trace their labyrinthine movements, to dive into their bright, jeweled caverns, and converse with the sea-nymphs that dwell there, is its own abundant reward; not merely from the enjoyment that accompanies it, but because such pleasure, indeed all pleasure that is congenial to our better nature, is refreshing and invigorating, like a draught of nectar from heaven. In such studies we imitate the example of the eagle, unsealing his eyesight by gazing at the sun.

South, in his sixth Sermon, after speaking of the difficulties which we have to encounter in the search after truth, urges the beneficial effect of those difficulties. "Truth (he says) is a great stronghold, barred and fortified by God and Nature; and diligence is properly the Understanding's laying siege to it; so that, as in a kind of warfare, it must be perpetually upon the watch, observing all the avenues and passes to it, and accordingly makes its approaches. Sometimes it thinks it gains a point; and presently again it finds itself

yet still it renews the  
 difficulty afresh, plants this  
 argument, this consequence,  
 like so many intellectual  
 it forces a way and passage  
 enclosed truth, that so long  
 all its assaults. The Jesuits  
 common amongst them, touching  
 of youth, (in which their chief  
 talent lies,) that *Vexatio dat intel-*  
 when the mind casts and turns itself  
 in one thing to another, strains this  
 the soul to apprehend, that to judge,  
 divide, a fourth to remember,—thus  
 at the nice and scarce observable dif-  
 of some things, and the real agreement of  
 will at length it brings all the ends of  
 and various hypothesis together, sees how  
 part coheres with and depends upon another,  
 clears off all the appearing contrarieties and  
 contradictions, that seemed to lie cross and un-  
 th, and to make the whole unintelligible,—  
 is the laborious and vexatious inquest, that  
 the soul must make after science. For Truth,  
 like a stately dame, will not be seen, nor shew  
 herself at the first visit, nor match with the  
 understanding upon an ordinary courtship or  
 ess. Long and tedious attendances must be  
 v, and the hardest fatigues endured and di-  
 d: nor did ever the most pregnant wit in the  
 i bring forth anything great, lasting, and



considerable, without some pain and travail, some pangs and throes before the delivery. Now all this that I have said is to shew the force of diligence in the investigation of truth, and particularly of the noblest of all truths, which is that of religion."

For my own part, I have ever gained the most profit, and the most pleasure also, from the books which have made me think the most: and, when the difficulties have once been overcome, these are the books which have struck the deepest root, not only in my memory and understanding, but likewise in my affections. For this point too should be taken into account. We are wont to think slightly of that, which it costs us a slight effort to win. When a maiden is too forward, her admirer deems it time to draw back. Whereas whatever has associated itself with the arousal and activity of our better nature, with the important and memorable epochs in our lives, whether moral or intellectual, is,—to cull a sprig from the beautiful passage in which Wordsworth describes the growth of Michael's love for his native hills,—

Our living being, even more  
Than our own blood, and,—could it less?—retains  
Strong hold on our affections, is to us  
A pleasurable feeling of blind love,  
The pleasure which there is in life itself.

If you would fertilize the mind, the plough must be driven over and through it. The gliding of wheels is easier and rapider, but only makes it

harder and more barren. Above all, in the present age of light reading, that is, of reading hastily, thoughtlessly, indiscriminately, unfruitfully, when most books are forgotten as soon as they are finished, and very many sooner, it is well if something heavier is cast now and then into the midst of the literary public. This may scare and repel the weak: it will rouse and attract the stronger, and increase their strength by making them exert it. In the sweat of the brow is the mind as well as the body to eat its bread. *Nil sine magno Musa labore dedit mortalibus.*

Are writers then to be studiously difficult, and to tie knots for the mere purpose of compelling their readers to untie them? Not so. Let them follow the bent of their own minds. Let their style be the faithful mirror of their thoughts. Some minds are too rapid and vehement and redundant to flow along in lucid transparence; some have to break over rocks, and to force a way through obstacles, which would have dammed them in. Tacitus could not write like Cesar. Niebuhr could not write like Goldsmith. u.

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Train the understanding. Take care that the mind has a stout and straight stem. Leave the flowers of wit and fancy to come of themselves. Sticking them on will not make them grow. You can only engraft them, by grafting that which will produce them.

Another rule of good gardening may also be

applied with advantage to the mind. Thin your fruit in spring, that the tree may not be exhausted, and that some of it may come to perfection. U.

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There are some fine passages, I am told, in that book.

Are there? Then beware of them. Fine passages are mostly *culs de sacs*. For in books also does one see

Rich windows that exclude the light,  
And passages that lead to nothing. U.

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A writer is the only person who can give more than he has. It may be doubted however whether such gifts are not mostly in bad money. U.

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Fields of thought seem to need lying fallow. After some powerful mind has brought a new one into cultivation, the same seed is sown in it over and over again, until the crop degenerates, and the land is worn out. Hereupon it is left alone, and gains time to recruit, before a subsequent generation is led, by the exhaustion of the country round, to till it afresh. U.

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The ultimate tendency of civilization is toward barbarism.

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The question is not whether a doctrine is beautiful, but whether it is true. When we want

to go to a place, we don't ask whether the road leads through a pretty country, but whether it is the right road, the road pointed out by authority, the turnpike-road.

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How poorly must he have profited by the study of Plato, who said, *Malo cum Platone errare, quam cum istis vera sentire!* A maxim of this kind may indeed serve for those who are not ordained to the ministry of Truth. The great bulk of mankind must in all things take much for granted, as everybody must in many things. They whose calling is to act, need to have certain guiding principles of faith to look up to, fixt like stars high above the changeful, and often storm-rent atmosphere of their cares and doubts and passions, principles which they may hold to be eternal, from their fixedness, and from their light. The philosopher too himself must perforce take many things for granted, seeing that the capacities of human knowledge are so limited. Only his assumptions will be in lower and commoner matters, with regard to which he will have to receive much on trust. For his thoughts dwell among principles. He mounts, like the astronomer, into the region of the stars themselves, and measures their magnitudes and their distances, and calculates their orbits, and distinguishes the fixt from the erring, the solar sources of light from the satellites which fill their urns from these everlasting fountains, and distinguishes those also, which

dutifully preserve their regular, beatific courses, from the vagrant emissaries of destruction. He must have an entire, implicit faith in the illimitable beneficence, that is, in the divinity of Truth. He must devoutly believe that God is Truth, and that Truth therefore must ever be one with God.

Cicero, I am aware, ascribes that speech (*Tusc. Quaest. i. 17*) to the young man whom he is instructing; a circumstance overlooked by those who have tried to confirm themselves in their faint-heartedness, by pleading his authority for believing that a falsehood may be better than Truth. But he immediately applauds his pupil, and makes the sentiment his own: *Macte virtute: ego enim ipse cum eodem illo non invito erraverim*. It is plain from this sentence, the evidence of which might be strengthened by a number of others, that what Cicero admired so much in Plato, was not his philosophy. On the contrary, as he himself often forgot the thinker in the talker, so, his eye for words having been sharpened by continual practice, he was apt to look in others also at the make of the garments their thoughts were arrayed in, rather than at the countenance or the body of the thoughts themselves. He had told us himself a little before: *Hanc perfectam philosophiam semper judicavi, quae de maximis quaestionibus copiose posset ornateque dicere*. Thus what he valued most in Plato, was his eloquence; the true, unequalled worth of which however is its perfect fitness for exhibiting the thoughts it contains, or, so to say, its

transparency. For, while in most other writers the thoughts are only seen dimly, as in water, where the medium itself is visible, and more or less distorts or obscures them, being often turbid, often coloured, and often having no little mud in it, in Plato one almost looks through the language, as through air, discerning the exact form of the objects which stand therein, and every part and shade of which is brought out by the sunny light resting upon them. Indeed, when reading Plato, we hardly think about the beauty of his style, or notice it except for its clearness: but, as our having felt the sensations of sickness makes us feel and enjoy the sensations of health, so does the acquaintance we are forced to contract with all manner of denser and murkier writers, render us vividly sensible of the bright daylight of Plato. Cicero however might almost have extracted *the Beauties of Plato*, as somebody has extracted *the Beauties of Shakspeare*; which give as good a notion of his unspeakable, exuberant beauty, as a *pot pourri* gives of a flower-garden, or as a lump of teeth would give of a beautiful mouth.

As to Plato's pure, impartial, searching philosophy, Cicero was too full of prejudices to sympathize with it. Philosophy was not the bread of life to him, but a medicinal cordial in his afflictions. He loved it, not for itself, but for certain results which he desired and hoped to gain from it. In philosophy he was never more than an Eclectic, that is, in point of fact, no philosopher at all. For

the very essence of the philosophical mind lies in this, that it is constrained by an irresistible impulse to ascend to primary, necessary principles, and cannot halt until it reaches the living, streaming sources of Truth; whereas the Eclectic will stop short where he likes, at any maxim to which he chooses to ascribe the authority of a principle. The philosophical mind must be systematic, ever seeking to behold all things in their connexion, as parts or members of a great organic whole, and impregnating them all with the electric spirit of order; while the Eclectic is content if he can string together a number of generalizations. A Philosopher incorporates and animates; an Eclectic heaps and ties up. The Philosopher combines multiplicity into unity; the Eclectic leaves unity straggling about in multiplicity. The former opens the arteries of Truth, the latter its veins. Cicero's legal habits peer out from under his philosophical cloak, in his constant appeal to precedent, his ready deference to authority. For in law, as in other things, the practitioner does not go beyond maxims, that is, secondary or tertiary principles, taking his stand upon the mounds which his predecessors have erected.

Cicero was indeed led by his admiration of Plato to adopt the form of the dialogue for his own treatises, of all forms the best fitted for setting forth philosophical truths in their free expansion and intercommunion, as well as in their distinctness and precision, without chaining up Truth,

and making her run round and round in the mill of a partial and narrow system. But he has nothing of the dialectic spirit. His collocutors do not wrestle with one another, as they did in the intellectual gymnasia of the Greeks. After some preliminary remarks, and the interchange of a few compliments characterized by that urbanity in which no man surpasses him, he throws off the constraint of logical analysis ; and his speakers sit down by turns in the portico, and deliver their didactic harangues, just as in a bad play the personages tell you their story at length, and of course each to his own advantage. You must not interrupt them with a question for the world ; you would be sure to put them out.

But if the love of Plato is a worthless ground for preferring error to truth, still more reprehensible is it to go wrong out of hatred or contempt for any one, be he who he may. Could the Father of lies speak truth, it would be our duty to believe him when he did so. v.

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In the Preface to Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*, there is a sentence, which at first thought may remind us of Cicero's saying about Plato, and may seem analogous to it, but which, when more closely examined, we perceive to be its diametrical opposite. That unhappy enthusiast, who, through a calamitous combination of circumstances, galling and fretting a morbidly sensitive temperament, became a fanatical hater of the perversions



and distortions conjured up by his own feverish imagination, there says : " For my part I had rather be damned with Plato and Lord Bacon, than go to heaven with Paley and Malthus." Here however, if we look away from the profaneness of the expressions, the meaning is grand and noble. Such is the author's faith in truth and goodness, and his love for them, he would rather incur everlasting misery by cleaving to them, than enjoy everlasting happiness, if it could only be won by sacrificing his reason and conscience to falsehood and cold-hearted worldliness. Thus this sentence at bottom is only tantamount to that most magnanimous saying of antiquity, *Fiat justitia, ruat coelum* : which does not mean, that the fulfilment of Justice would be the knell of the Universe, but that, even though this were to be the consequence, even though the world were to go to rack, Justice must and ought to be fulfilled. The mind which had not been taught how Mercy and Truth, Righteousness and Peace were to meet together and to be reconciled for ever in the Divine Atonement, could not mount to a sublimer anticipation of the blessed declaration, that Heaven and Earth shall pass away, but the word of God shall not pass away.

At the same time Shelley's words exhibit the miserable delusion he was under, and shew how what he hated, under the name of Christianity, was not Christianity itself, but rather a medley of antichristian notions, which he blindly identified

with it, from finding them associated with it in vulgar opinion. v.

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The name Eclectic is often misused nowadays, by being applied to such as will not surrender their reason and conscience to the yoke of a dogmatical system, anathematizing everything beyond its pale,—to those who, recognising the infinite fulness and plastic life of Truth, delight to trace it out under all its manifestations, and to acknowledge that, amid the numberless errors and perversions and exaggerations with which it has been mixt up, it has still been the one source of a living power in every mode of human opinion. Thus I have seen the name assigned to Neander, and to other writers no less alien from the Eclectic spirit. This however is mere ignorance and confusion.

The Eclectic is a person who picks out certain propositions, such as strike his fancy or his moral sense, and seem edifying or useful, from divers systems of philosophy, and strings or patches them together, without troubling himself much about their organic unity or coherence. When the true philosophical spirit, which everywhere seeks after unity, under the conviction that the universe must reflect the oneness of the contemplating as well as of the Creative Mind, was waning away, dilettanti philosophers, who were fond of dabbling in the records of prior speculations, arose both among the Greeks and at Rome : and of these, Diogenes Laertius tells us (i. §. 21), Potamo of Alexandria introduced

ἐκλεκτικὴν αἴρεσιν, ἐκλεξάμενος τὰ ἀρέσαστα ἐξ ἐκάστης τῶν αἱρέσεων. That is to say, he may have been the first to assume the name; but the spirit which led him to do so was already widely diffused. Indeed little else in the way of philosophy gained much favour, from his days, at the beginning of the Roman empire, down to the first coming forward of the Schoolmen.

This procedure may best be illustrated by the wellknown story of Zeuxis, who took the most beautiful features and members of several beautiful women to make a more beautiful one than any in his Helen. In fact this story is related by Cicero at the beginning of the second Book of his work *De Inventione*, with the view of justifying his own design of writing a treatise, in which, he says, "Non unum aliquod proposuimus exemplum, cujus omnes partes, quocumque essent in genere, exprimentae nobis necessario viderentur; sed, omnibus unum in locum coactis scriptoribus, quod quisque commodissime praecipere videbatur, excerpimus, et ex variis ingeniis excellentissima quaeque libavimus." He adds that, if his skill were equal to that of the painter, his work ought to be still better, inasmuch as he had a larger stock of models to choose from: "Ille una ex urbe, et ex eo numero virginum, quae tum erant, eligere potuit: nobis omnium, quicumque fuerunt, ab ultimo principio hujus praeceptionis usque ad hoc tempus, expositis copiis, quodcumque placeret eligendi potestas fuit." That such a process,

though the genius of Zeuxis may have corrected its evils, is not the right one for the production of a great work of art,—that a statue or picture ought not to be a piece of patchwork, or a posy of multifarious beauties,—that it must spring from an idea in the mind of the artist, as is express by Raphael in the passage quoted above (Vol. i. p. 382), will now be generally acknowledged by the intelligent; though it continually happens that clever young men, such as Cicero then was, fancy they shall dazzle the sun, by bringing together a lamp from this quarter and that, with a dozen candles from others. Cicero himself, in his later writings on the same subject, followed a wiser course, and drew from the rich stores of his own experience and knowledge. But how congenial the other practice was to the age, is proved by Dionysius, who sets up the same story of Zeuxis, in the introduction to his *Judgement on Ancient Writers*, as an example it behoves us to follow, καὶ τῆς ἐκείνων ψυχῆς ἀπανθίζεσθαι τὸ κρεῖττον.

On the other hand they who are gifted with a true philosophical spirit, who feel the weight of the mystery of the universe, on whom it presses like a burthen, and will not let them rest, who are constrained by an inward necessity to solve the problems it presents to their age, will naturally have much sympathy with those in former ages who have been impelled by the same necessity to attempt the solution of similar problems. They

will, or at all events ought to regard them as fellow-workers, as brothers. The problems which occupied former ages, were only different phases of the same great problem, by which they themselves are spell-bound. Whatever there was of truth in the solutions devised of yore, must still retain its character of truth, though it will have become partial, and can no longer be regarded as absolute. As in Science the later, more perfect systems incorporate all the truths ascertained by previous discoveries, nay, take these truths as the materials for further researches, so must it also be, under certain modifications, in Philosophy. Hence to call a philosopher an Eclectic on this account is a mere misapprehension of the name, and of the laws which govern the development of the human mind. It is just as absurd, as it would be to call Laplace and Herschel Eclectics, because their speculations recognise and incorporate the results of the discoveries of Newton and Kepler and Galileo and Copernicus, nay, of Hipparchus and Ptolemy, so far as there was truth in them.

On this topic there is a remarkable passage in the 12th Chapter of Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*, where the author says that the doctrines of Leibnitz, "as hitherto interpreted, have not produced the effect, which Leibnitz himself, in a most instructive passage, describes as the criterion of a true philosophy, namely, that it would at once explain and collect the fragments of truth scattered through systems apparently the most

incongruous. The truth, says he, is diffused more widely than is commonly believed ; but it is often painted, yet oftener maskt, and is sometimes mutilated, and sometimes, alas, in close alliance with mischievous errors. The deeper however we penetrate into the ground of things, the more truth we discover in the doctrines of the greater number of the philosophical sects. . The want of substantial reality in the objects of the senses, according to the Sceptics,—the harmonies or numbers, the prototypes and ideas, to which the Pythagoreans and Platonists reduced all things,—the ONE and ALL of Parmenides and Plotinus, without Spinozism,—the necessary connexion of things according to the Stoics, reconcilable with the spontaneity of the other schools,—the vital philosophy of the Cabbalists and Hermetists, who assumed the universality of sensation,—the substantial forms and entelechies of Aristotle and the Schoolmen,—together with the mechanical solution of all particular phenomena according to Democritus and the recent philosophers,—all these we shall find united in one perspective central point, which shews regularity and a coincidence of all the parts in the very object, which from every other point of view must appear confused and distorted. The spirit of sectarianism has been hitherto our fault, and the cause of our failures. We have imprisoned our own conceptions by the lines which we have drawn in order to exclude the conceptions of others.”

The observations of Leibnitz here referred to

are so interesting,—both as an expression of his own genius, which was always seeking after harmony and unity, and as the anticipation of a truth which was to come out more distinctly in the subsequent expansion of philosophy, but which had to lie dormant for nearly a century after he uttered it, and which even now is recognised by few beyond the limits of the country where it was uttered,—that I will quote what he says on the subject. It occurs in his first letter to Remond de Montmort, written in 1714, not long before the close of his long life of meditation, and is also pleasing as a record of the growth of his own mind. “J’ai tâché de déterrer et de réunir la vérité ensévelie et dissipée sous les opinions des différentes sectes des Philosophes ; et je crois y avoir ajouté quelque chose du mien pour faire quelques pas en avant. Les occasions de mes études dès ma première jeunesse, m’y ont donné de la facilité. Etant enfant j’appris Aristote ; et même les Scholastiques ne me rebutèrent point ; et je n’en suis point fâché présentement. Mais Platon aussi dès lors, avec Plotin, me donnèrent quelque contentement, sans parler d’autres anciens, que je consultai. Par après étant émancipé des écoles triviales, je tombai sur les Modernes ; et je me souviens que je me promenai seul dans un bocage auprès de Leipsic, appelé le Rosendal, à l’âge de quinze ans, pour délibérer si je garderois les Formes substantielles. Enfin le Mécanisme prévalut, et me porta à m’appliquer aux

Mathématiques. Il est vrai que je n'entrai dans les plus profondes, qu'après avoir conversé avec M. Huygens à Paris. Mais quand je cherchai les dernières raisons du Mécanisme, et des loix même du mouvement, je fus tout surpris de voir qu'il était impossible de les trouver dans les Mathématiques, et qu'il falloit retourner à la Métaphysique. C'est ce qui me ramena aux Entelechies, et du matériel au formel, et me fit enfin comprendre, après plusieurs corrections et avancements de mes notions, que les monades, ou les substances simples, sont les seules véritables substances ; et que les choses matérielles ne sont que des phénomènes, mais bien fondés et bien liés. C'est de quoi Platon, et même les Académiciens postérieurs, et encore les Sceptiques, ont entrevu quelque chose ; mais ces messieurs, après Platon, n'en ont pas si bien usé que lui. J'ai trouvé que le plûpart des Sectes ont raison dans une bonne partie de ce qu'elles avancent, mais non pas tant en ce qu'elles nient. Les Formalistes, comme les Platoniciens, et les Aristotéliens, ont raison de chercher la source des choses dans les causes finales et formelles. Mais ils ont tort de négliger les efficientes et les matérielles, et d'en inférer, comme faisait M. Henri Morus en Angleterre, et quelques autres Platoniciens, qu'il y a des phénomènes qui ne peuvent être expliqués mécaniquement. Mais de l'autre côté les Matérialistes, ou ceux qui s'attachent uniquement à la Philosophie mécanique, ont tort de rejeter les considérations métaphysiques, et de vouloir tout



expliquer par ce qui dépend de l'imagination. Je me flatte d'avoir pénétré l'Harmonie des differens règnes, et d'avoir vu que les deux parties ont raison, pourvu qu'ils ne se choquent point ; que tout se fait mécaniquement et métaphysiquement en même temps dans les phénomènes de la nature, mais que la source de la mécanique est dans la métaphysique. Il n'étoit pas aisé de découvrir ce mystère, parce qu'il y a peu de gens qui se donnent la peine de joindre ces deux sortes d'études." Vol. v. pp. 8, 9. Ed. Dutens.

In his third Letter to Remond, Leibnitz recurs to the same subject. "Si j'en avois le loisir, je comparerois mes dogmes avec ceux des Anciens et d'autres habiles hommes. La vérité est plus répandue qu'on ne pense ; mais elle est très souvent fardée, et très souvent aussi envelopée, et même affoiblie, mutilée, corrompue par des additions qui la gâtent, ou la rendent moins utile. En faisant remarquer ces traces de la vérité dans les Anciens, ou, pour parler plus généralement, dans les antérieurs, on tireroit l'or de la boue, le diamant de sa mine, et la lumière des ténèbres ; et ce seroit en effet *perennis quaedam Philosophia*. On peut même dire, qu'on y remarquerait quelque progrès dans les connoissances. Les Orientaux ont de belles et de grandes idées de la Divinité. Les Grecs y ont ajouté le raisonnement et une forme de science. Les Pères de l'Eglise ont rejetté ce qu'il y avoit de mauvais dans la Philosophie des Grecs ; mais les Scholastiques ont tâché d'employer utilement pour

le Christianisme, ce qu'il y avoit de passable dans la Philosophie des Payens. J'ai dit souvent *aurum latere in stercore illo scholastico barbariei*; et je souhaiterois qu'on pût trouver quelque habile homme versé dans cette Philosophie Hibernoise et Espagnole, qui eut de l'inclination et de la capacité pour en tirer le bon. Je suis sûr qu'il trouveroit sa peine payée par plusieurs belles et importantes vérités." p. 13.

That Philosophy, in the last sixty years, has been advancing at no slow pace toward the grand goal, which Leibnitz descried from afar, by a Pisgah view of the land he himself was not destined to enter, will not be questioned by any one acquainted with the recent philosophers of Germany. One of the clearest proofs German Philosophy has exhibited of its being on the road toward the truth, has lain in this very fact, that it has been enabled to appreciate the philosophical systems of former ages, as they had never been appreciated previously. If we look, for instance, into Dugald Stewart's Historical Essay, we find no attempt even to do anything of the sort. As I have said above (p. 74), he merely selects a few remarks or maxims from the writings of preceding philosophers, such as at all resemble the observations of his own philosophy, or the received maxims of his own age, and takes no thought about anything else, nor even about the coherence of these remarks with the rest of the systems they belong to. On the other haad, if we turn to Ritter's History of

Philosophy, or to Hegel's Lectures,—to mention two of the chief examples of what has been repeated in many others,—we see them endeavouring to estimate all prior systems according to their historical position in the progressive development of human thought, to shew what truths it was the especial province of each to bring out, and how each fulfilled its appointed work. In England this method has been applied to the history of Science by Dr Whewell, to that of Philosophy in the History of Moral Philosophy published in the Encyclopedia Metropolitana.

Now that this historical, genetical method of viewing prior systems of philosophy is something totally different from Eclecticism, nay, is the direct opposite to it, will not need further proof. But it is termed conceited and presumptuous, to pretend to know better than all the wisest men of former times, and to sit in judgement upon them. This however is sheer nonsense. Conceit and presumption may indeed shew themselves in this, as in every other mode of uttering our thoughts: but there can hardly be a better corrective for those evil tendencies, than the attentive, scrutinizing contemplation of the great men of former times, with the view of ascertaining the amount of the truth they were allowed to discern, the power of the impulse they gave to the progress of the human mind. If we know more in some respects than they did, this itself is a ground of gratitude to them through whose labours we have gained this advantage, and

of reverence for those who with such inferior means achieved so much. It is no way derogatory to Newton, or Kepler, or Galileo, that Science in these days should have advanced far beyond them. Rather is this itself their crown of glory. Their works are still bearing fruit, and will continue to do so. The truths which they discovered are still living in our knowledge, pregnant with infinite consequences. Nor will any one be so ready and able to do them justice, as he who has carefully examined what they actually accomplished for the advancement of Science. So too will it be with regard to Socrates and Plato and Aristotle, to Anselm and Bacon and Leibnitz. The better we know and appreciate what they did, the humbler it must needs make us. Nay the very process of endeavouring faithfully and carefully to enter into the minds of others, as it can only be effected by passing out of ourselves, out of our habitual prepossessions and predilections, is a discipline both of love and of humility. In this respect at all events there can be no comparison between such a Philosophy, and an exclusive dogmatical system, which peremptorily condemns whatever does not coincide with it.

Of course this profounder Philosophy, which aims at tracing the philosophical idea through its successive manifestations, is not exempt from the dangers which encompass every other form of Knowledge, especially from that which is expressed by the separation between the Tree of Knowledge and

the Tree of Life. My dear friend, Sterling, says, in one of his letters (p. xxxviii.): "Cousin makes it the peculiar glory of our epoch, that it endeavours to comprehend the mind of all other ages. But I fear it must be the tendency of his philosophy, while it examines what all other philosophies were, to prevent us from being anything ourselves.—We must live, not only for the past, but also for the present. Herein is the great merit of Coleridge: and I confess for myself, I would rather be a believing Jew or Pagan, than a man who sees through all religions, but looks not with the eyes of any." How far this censure may apply to Cousin, we need not enquire; but there seems no reason why it should attach to that form of Philosophy, of which we have been speaking, more than to any other. In all speculation, of whatsoever kind, there is a centrifugal tendency, which requires to be continually counteracted and kept in check. This would appear to have been the peculiar work of Socrates in Greek philosophy, as it had been previously of Pythagoras, and as it was that of Bacon in Science. But, though the Tree of Knowledge is not the Tree of Life, the Tree, or rather the scrubby underwood of Ignorance is quite as far removed from it: nor shall we turn the Tree of Knowledge into it, by lopping off its expanding, sheltering branches, which spread out on every side, and converting it into a Maypole. U.

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There are a number of points, with regard to

which we understand the ancients better than they understood themselves.

Does this seem strange? Mount a hill: will you not descry the outlines and bearings of the vallies or plains at its feet, more clearly than they who are living in the midst of them? That which was positive among the ancients, their own feelings, the direct power which their religion, their political and social institutions, their literature, their art exercised upon them, they undoubtedly understood far better than we can hope to do. But the relations in which they stand to other nations, and to the general idea of human nature, the particular phase of that idea which was manifested in them, the place which they occupy in the progressive history of mankind,—and in like manner the connexion between their language, their institutions, their modes of thought, their form of religion, of literature, of philosophy, of art, and those of other nations, anterior, contemporaneous, or subsequent,—of all these things we have far better means of judging, than they could possibly have. Thus they were more familiar with their own country, with its mountains and dells and glens, its brooks and tarns, than any foreiner can be: yet we have a clearer view of its geographical position with reference to the rest of the earth.

Moreover such a general comparative survey will enable us to adjust the proportions of many things, which, in the eyes of persons living in the midst of them, would be exaggerated by

propinquity, or coloured and distorted by occasional feelings. In fact the postulate of Archimedes is no less indispensable for knowledge. To comprehend a thing thoroughly we need a standing-place out of it.

Such a *πρὸ στῶ* has been supplied for us all by Christianity. Therefore Christian Philosophy and Christian Science have an incalculable advantage of position over every other form of knowledge. υ.

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It might be allowable for a heathen to say of himself, with somewhat of selfcomplacency, that he was *Nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri*. As a body, when it is losing its unity, and resolving into its parts, is fast crumbling into nothingness, and as an ochlocracy is no more than a noisy prelude to anarchy, so is Polytheism to Atheism. Whenever we find a real religious feeling in any ancient writer, we may also discern a dim, though perhaps scarcely conscious recognition of Unity, of one supreme Deity, behind and above all the rest, who permits the gods of Olympus to play round his feet, smiling on their sports, or, if they become too wanton and boisterous, checking them with a frown. For any moral influence on its votaries, the worship of many gods is scarcely more powerful than no worship at all.

Besides it was the misfortune of Roman literature, that, as in that of the French, there was in it

No single volume paramount, no code,  
No master spirit, no determined road.

Such must needs be wanting, where political or social interests predominate over those which are more purely intellectual. Neither Poetry, nor Philosophy will thrive, when anything is standing by to overshadow them. They lose their dignity, and cannot walk freely as the handmaids of any other queen than Religion. The Greeks, on the other hand, had such a "volume paramount," a volume as to which their greatest poets might boast that their works were merely fragments from its inexhaustible banquet. Whereas the Romans had nothing, with regard to which they could enjoy the comfortable feeling, that they might cut and cut and come again. Their dishes, like those of our neighbours, were kickshaws, which, having already been hasht up a second time, were drained of their juices, and unfit for further use. If any of them became a standing dish, it was only, like artificial fruit, to be lookt at.

This want of a nest-egg is a calamity which no people can get the better of. There is scarcely any blessing so precious for the mind of a nation, as the possession of such a great national heirloom, a work loved by all, revered by all, familiar to all, from which all classes for generation after generation draw their views of Nature and of Life, which thus forms a great bond of intellectual and moral sympathy amongst all, in which all ranks may meet, as in a church, and all may feel at home. How fortunate then are we in England, inasmuch as,—over and above that which, wherever it has



not been withdrawn from the people by a short-sighted, narrowminded, selfseeking policy, is the "Volume Paramount," and the bond of union for all Christendom,—we have also the richest Eldorado of thought that man ever opened to man in the gold and diamond-mines of Shakspeare! *Paradise Lost* too may claim to be rankt as one of our volumes paramount, of our truly national works, which have mingled with the life-blood of the people. Indeed Erskine, I have been told, used to say, that, in addressing juries, he had found, there were three books, and only three, which he could always quote with effect, Shakspeare, Milton, and the Bible.

Moreover Horace's boast was the simple, naked utterance of that Eclectic spirit, which I have been speaking of as characterizing his age, and which is always sure to prevail among such as are especially termed men of the world. Nor was it a less apt expression of his own personal character. For he was the prototype, and hence has ever been the favorite, of wits and fine gentlemen, of those who count it a point of goodbreeding to seem pleased with everything, yet not to be strongly affected by anything, *nil admirari*. As the chief fear of such persons is, lest they should dishonour their breeding by betraying too strong feelings on any matter, Horace's declaration just meets their wishes. The pleasantest of dilettanti, he could add, *Quo me cunque rapit tempestas, deferor hospes*, without any regret at the thought that everywhere he was a

*hospes*, that nowhere had he a home. Chance was to him a more acceptable guide than any master; and he drifted along before the wind and tide, rejoicing that he had no pole-star to steer by.

In him, I say, such a boast might be excusable. But for a Christian moralist to take these lines as his motto seems strangely inappropriate. For we Christians are far happier than the poor guideless Heathens. We have a Master; and we know that His words are always true, and that they will be true eternally. Above all, for Johnson to make such a parade of masterlessness, as he does by prefixing these lines to the Rambler! for Johnson, who, whatever want of deference he might shew toward other masters, had one master ever close at his elbow, to whose words he was always ready to swear, a master too who never scrupled to try his patience by all sorts of wayward commands,—even himself, his own whims, his own caprices, his own imperious wilfulness. In fact this is usually the case with those who plume themselves on their unwillingness to bear the yoke of any authority. They are mostly the slaves of a despot, and therefore spurn the notion of being the subjects of a law. They have a Puck within their breasts, who is ever leading them “up and down, up and down:” and, as he is “feared in field and town,” both in town and field they stand alone. Or else he “drops his liquour in their eyes;” and then the next thing they look upon, “Be it on lion, bear, or wolf, or bull, Or meddling monkey, or on busy ape, They will

pursue it with the soul of love." Hence, though it is very true that Johnson was *Nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri*,—except indeed to his own words,—it was hardly becoming to make this state of sheer negativeness a matter of boast. If one is to boast at all, it should be grounded on something positive, on something implying an act of the reasonable will, not on our being carried *quocunque rapit tempestas*, which can only land us in the Limbo of Vanities.

Will it be deemed a piece of captiousness, if I go on to object, as others have done before, to the title of *the Rambler*? But that too seems to have little appropriateness for a person who seldom rambled further than from one side of his arm-chair to the other, from one cell in his brain to another. His reading is indeed said to have been always very desultory; so that one of his biographers thinks it questionable, whether he ever read any book entirely through, except the Bible. If this was indeed the fact, it would form the best intellectual apology for his criticisms. At all events his habit arose from that peculiarity which marks all his writings, as well as all the anecdotes of him, his incapacity for going out of himself, and entering into the minds of others, his inability to understand and sympathize with any form of human nature except his own. He only lookt into a book to contemplate his own image in it; and when anything came across that image, he turned to another volume. This is not rambling, but staying at home, in a home which is

no home, inasmuch as a home must have some one beside oneself to endear and consecrate it.

By some it may be thought that the misnomer of *the Rambler* receives a kind of justification from the circuitousness of the author's style. This however is not rambling: it would be livelier, if it were. It merely rolls round, like the sails of a mill, ponderously and sonorously and monotonously, yet seldom grinding any corn. In truth it would seem constructed for the purpose of going round a thing, and round it, and round it, without ever getting to it. His sentences might be compared to the hoops worn by ladies in those days, and were almost equally successful in disguising and disfiguring the form, as well as in keeping you at a distance from it. In reading them one may often be puzzled to think how they could proceed from a man whose words in conversation were so close and sinewy. But Johnson's strength, as well as his weakness, lay in his will; and in conversation, when an object that irritated him stood before him, his words came down upon it, more like blows, than words. In reasoning on the other hand, in that which requires meditation or imagination, the will has little power, except so far as it has been exercised continuously in the formation and cultivation of the mind. A man cannot by a momentary act of the will endow himself with faculties and knowledge, which he does not possess already; though he can make himself pour out words, the bigness of which shall stand in lieu of force, and their multitude in lieu of

meaning. How such a style could gain the admiration which Johnson's gained, in an age when numbers of men and women wrote incomparably better, would be another grave puzzle, unless one remembered that it was the age when hoops and toupees were thought to highten the beauty of women, and full-bottomed wigs the dignity of men. He who saw in his glass how his wig became his face and head, might easily infer that a similar full-bottomed, well-curled friz of words would be no less becoming to his thoughts. Nor did he miscalculate the effect upon his immediate readers. They who admired the hairy wig, were in raptures with the wordy one.

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U.

Young men are perpetually told that the first of duties is to render oneself independent. But the phrase, unless it mean that the first of duties is to avoid hanging, is unhappily chosen; saying what it ought not to say, and leaving unsaid what it ought to say.

It is true, that, in a certain sense, the first of duties is to become free; because Freedom is the antecedent condition for the fulfilment of every other duty, the only element in which a reasonable soul can exist. Until the umbilical chord is severed, the child can hardly be said to have a separate life. So long as the heart and mind continue in slavery, it is impossible for a man to offer up a voluntary and reasonable sacrifice of himself. Now in slavery, since the Fall, we are all born; from which slavery

we have to emancipate ourselves by some act of our own, halfconscious, it may be, or almost unconscious. By some act of our own, I say; not indeed unassisted; for every parent, every friend, every teacher is a minister ordained to help us in this act. But, though we cannot by our own act lift ourselves out of the pit, we must by an act of our own take hold of the hand which offers to lift us out of it. The same thing is implied in every act of duty; which can only be an act of duty, so far as it is the act of a free, voluntary agent. Moreover, if we ascend in the scale of duties, we must also ascend in the scale of freedom. A person must have cast off the tyrannous yoke of the flesh, of its frailties and its lusts, before he can become the faithful servant of his country and his God.

Hence we perceive that the true motive for our striving to set ourselves free is, to manifest our freedom by resigning it, through an act to be renewed every moment, ever resuming and ever resigning it; to the end that our service may be entire, that the service of the hands may likewise be the service of the will; even as the Apostle, being *free from all, made himself servant to all*. This is the accomplishment of the great Christian paradox, *Whosoever will be great, let him be a minister; and whosoever will be chief, let him be a servant*.

Nothing can be more thoroughly opposed to the sublime humility of this precept, than the maxim which enjoins independence. At best Independence is a negative abstraction, and has merely assumed

the specious semblance of reality, amid the multitude of indistinct, insubstantial words, which have been driven across our language from foreign regions; whereas Freedom is something positive. So far as our dictionaries, which in such matters are by no means safe guides, may be relied on, the word *independence*, in its modern acceptation, can hardly have come into use till after the Revolution. The earliest instance of it cited is from Pope, but is such as shews it must already have been a familiar expression. Nor is it ill suited to that age of superficial, disjointed, unconnected thought, when the work of cutting off the present from the past began, and people first took it into their heads, that the mass of evil in the world was the result, not of their own follies and vices, but of what their ancestors had done and established. That such an unscriptural word should not occur in our Bible, is not surprising: for Independence, as an attribute of man, if it be traced to its root, is a kind of synonym for irreligion. Nor, I believe, is it to be found in this sense in any writer of the ages when men were trained by the discipline of logic to think more closely and speak more precisely. Primarily however the word seems to have come from the Latinity of the Schoolmen,—for the Romans never acknowledged either the word or the thing signified by it,—and to have been coined, like other similar terms, for the sake of expressing one of those negations, out of which Philosophy compounds her idea of God; hereby confessing her

inability to attain to a positive idea. Thus, in Baxter's *Methodus Theologiae Christianae*, God is said to be, with reference to causation, *Non-causatus, Independens*. In his *Reasons of the Christian Religion*, he says: "The first universal matter is not an uncaused, *independent* being. If such there be, its inactivity and passiveness sheweth it to want the excellency of *independency*." Jackson (B. vi. c. 3) speaks of philosophers, who "allot a kind of *independent* being to immaterial substances." In Minshew's *Guide into the Tongues* (1625), *Independencie* is explained by *Absoluteness of one's self, without dependence on another*, which points to a like usage as already existing.

In this sense Segneri writes: *l'independenza é un tesoro inalienabile di Dio solo*. When thus used, the word expresses an attribute which belongs exclusively to the Deity, in the only way in which our intellect can express it, by a negation of its opposite. But, when applied to man, it directly contravenes the first and supreme laws of our nature, the very essence of which is universal dependence upon God, and universal inter-dependence on one another. Hence Leighton, speaking of disobedience, says (Serm. xv): "This is still the treasonable pride or *independency*, and wickedness of our nature, rising up against God who formed us of nothing." With this our rightful state Freedom is not irreconcilable: indeed, if our dependence is to be reasonable and voluntary, Freedom, as I have already said, is indispensable to it. Accordingly



Shakspeare, in his *Measure for Measure* (Act iv. sc. 3), has combined the two words: the Provost there replies to the Duke, *I am your free dependent*; where *free* signifies voluntary, willing. Now in a somewhat different sense we ought all to be *free dependents*. But nobody can be an *independent dependent*. As applied to man, *independent* can only have a relative sense, signifying that he is free from certain kinds of dependence. In this sense Cudworth often speaks of the heathen belief in several *independent* gods, that is, not absolutely, in the signification exemplified above, but *independent* of each other. In this sense too the name was assumed by the religious sect who intended thereby both to express their rejection of all previously established authority, and their notion that every particular congregation ought to be insulated and *independent* of all others. So again the American war was not to assert the Freedom, but the *Independence* of America. Thus things came to such a pass, that Smollett wrote an ode to *Independence*, calling it, or her, or him, "Lord of the lion heart and eagle eye." Nay, even Wordsworth, in one of his early poems, after describing the scenery round the Lake of Lucerne, wrote: "Even here Content has fixed her smiling reign, With Independence, child of high Disdain," a line scarcely less objectionable in point of taste, than as glorifying the child of such a parent.

Freedom is susceptible of degrees.  
According to the capacity for Freedom in the person

who attains to it. There is one Freedom in the peasant, who is unable to read, and whose time is wellnigh engrossed by bodily labour, but who humbly reveres the holy words proclaimed to him on his one day of weekly rest; and there is another Freedom in the poet, or philosopher, or statesman, or prince, who, with a full consciousness of the sacrifice he is making, well knowing what he is giving up and why, and feeling the strength of the reluctancies he has to combat and overpower, increast as it is by the increast means of gratifying and pampering them, still in singleness of heart devotes all his faculties to the service of God in the various ministries of goodwill toward men. There is one Freedom in the maiden, who in her innocence scarcely knows of sin, either its allurements or its perils, and whose life glides along gently and transparently amid flowers and beneath shade; and another Freedom in the man, the stream of whose life must flow through the haunts of his fellow-creatures, and must receive the pollution of cities into it, and must become muddy if it be turbulent, and can only preserve its purity by its majestic calmness and might. There was one Freedom in Ismene, and a higher and nobler in Antigone. There was one Freedom in Adam before his Fall, and another in St Paul after his conversion. Yet, though everywhere different, it is everywhere essentially the same. Although it admits of innumerable gradations, in every one it may be entire and perfect: and, wherever it is

entire and perfect, all lesser distinctions vanish. One star may indeed appear larger and brighter than another: but they are all permitted to nestle together on the impartial bosom of Night, and journey onward for ever, one mighty inseparable family. Nay, those which seem the smallest and feeblest, may perchance in reality be the largest and most splendid; only our accidental position misleads our judgement.

Independence on the other hand neither admits of degrees, nor of equality, neither of difference, nor of sameness. In fact nothing in the universe ever was, or ever can be, or was ever conceived to be independent; except forsooth the atoms of the Corpuscular Philosophy: and even this Philosophy was constrained to acknowledge, that a hubbub of independent entities can produce nothing beyond a hubbub of independent entities. Hence, after rarifying the contents of its logical airpump, until there was no possibility for anything to exist therein, it was forced to turn the cock, and let in a little air, for the sake of giving its atoms a partial impulse, and thus bringing them to coalesce and interdepend.

Let it not be said that this is a fanciful quibble about words, and that Independence and Freedom mean the same thing in the end. They never did; they do not; they cannot. Independence is merely relative and outward: Freedom has its source within, in the depths of our spiritual life, and cannot subsist unless it is fed by fresh supplies

from thence. Its essence is love; for it is love that delivers us from the bondage of self. Its home is peace; from which indeed it often strays far, but for which it always feels a homesick longing. Its lifeblood is truth, which alone can free us from the delusions of the world, and of our own carnal nature. Whereas the essence of Independence is hatred and jealousy, its home strife and warfare; it feeds upon delusions, and is itself the greatest. It was not until the true idea of Freedom, as not only reconcilable with Law and Order and the obedience and sacrifice of the Will, but requiring them imperatively to preserve it from running riot and perishing in wilfulness, was fading away, that the new word *Independence* was set up in its room. Since that time the apostles of Independence in political and social life, and of Atheism, that kindred negation, in religion, have so bewildered their hearers and themselves, that it is become very difficult to revive the true idea of Freedom, and to make people understand how it is no way necessary, for the sake of becoming free, to pull down the whole edifice of society, with all its time-hallowed, majestic sanctities, and to scatter its stones about in singleness and independence on the ground. Yet assuredly it would not be more absurd to call such a multitude of scattered, independent stones a house, than to suppose that a million, or twenty millions, of independent human beings, each stickling for his independence, and carrying out this principle through the ramifications

of civil and domestic life, can coalesce into a nation or a state. There is need of mortar: there is need of a builder, yes, of a master builder: there is need of dependence, coherence, subordination of the parts to the whole and to each other. U.

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A lawyer's brief will be brief, before a freethinker thinks freely. U.

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The most bigoted persons I have known have been in some things the most sceptical. The most sceptical notoriously are often the greatest bigots. How account for this? except on the supposition that they are trees of the same kind, accidentally planted on opposite hillocks, and swayed habitually by the violence of opposite and partial gusts, which have checked their growth, twisted their tops, and pointed their stag-heads against each other with an aspect of hatred and defiance.

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The prophet who was slain by a lion, had a nobler and more merciful death than Bishop Hatto, who was eaten up by rats. Neither the crab, that walks with its back foremost, nor the polypus, that fittest emblem of a democracy, ranks so high among animals, that we should be ambitious of imitating them in the construction of the body politic. Indeed it seems an instinct among animals, to hang down their tails; except when the peacock spreads his out in the sunshine of a gala day, with its

rows of eyes tier above tier, like the vista of a merry theatre. Unless Society can effect by education, what Lord Monboddo holds man to have done by willing it, and can get rid of her tail, it will be wisest to let the educated classes keep their natural station at the head. u.

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At Avignon I saw some large baths in the garden by the temple of Diana, built on the foundations of the old Roman ones. *Does anybody bathe here now?* we askt; for we could see no materials for the purpose.

*No;* the guide answered. *Before the Revolution, the rich used to bathe here: but they wanted to keep the baths to themselves; and the poor wanted to come too; and now nobody comes.*

What an epitome of a revolution!

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Few books have more than one thought: the generality indeed have not quite so many. The more ingenious authors of the former seem to think that, if they once get their candle lighted, it will burn on for ever. Yet even a candle gives a sorry, melancholy light, unless it has a brother beside it, to shine on it and keep it cheerful. For lights and thoughts are social and sportive: they delight in playing with and into each other. One can hardly conceive a duller state of existence than sitting at whist with three dummies: and yet many of our prime philosophers have seldom done anything else. u.

To illustrate signifies to make clear. It would be well if writers would keep this in mind, and still better, if preachers were to do so. They would then feel the necessity of suiting their illustrations to their hearers. As it is, illustrations often seem to be stuck in for the same reason as shrubs round stables and outhouses, to keep the meaning out of sight.

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υ.

Apollo was content to utter his oracles, and left the hearers to make out their interpretation and meaning. So should his priests, poets. They should speak intelligibly indeed, but oracularly, even as all the works of Nature are oracular, embodying her laws, and manifesting them, but not spelling them in words, not writing notes and glosses on themselves, not telling you that they know the laws under which they act. They are content to prove their knowledge by fashioning themselves and all their courses according to it; and they leave man to decipher the laws from the living hieroglyphics in which they are written.

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υ.

The progress of Knowledge is slow. Like the sun, we cannot see it moving; but after a while we perceive that it has moved, nay, that it has moved onward.

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υ.

A cobweb is soon spun, and still sooner swept away.

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υ.

We all love to be in the right. Granted. We like exceedingly to have right on our side, but are not always particularly anxious about being on the side of right. We like to be in the right, when we are so; but we do not like it, when we are in the wrong. At least it seldom happens that anybody, after emerging from childhood, is very thankful to those who are kind enough to take trouble for the sake of guiding him from the wrong to the right. Few in any age have been able to join heartily in the magnanimous declaration uttered by Socrates in the *Gorgias*: "I am one who would gladly be refuted, if I should say anything not true,—and would gladly refute another, should he say anything not true,—but would no less gladly be refuted than refute. For I deem it a greater advantage; inasmuch as it is a greater advantage to be freed from the greatest of evils, than to free another; and nothing, I conceive, is so great an evil as a false opinion on matters of moral concernment."

With some such persons indeed, Hermann says he has met, after speaking of the prevalence of the opposite spirit, in the Preface to his second Edition of the *Hecuba*: "*Tum maxime irasci aliquem, quum se jure reprehensum videat, aliorum exemplis cognovi. Nec mirum: piget enim errasse: illud vero mirum, si quos sibimet ipsis irasci aequius erat, iram in eos effundunt, a quibus sunt reprehensi, quasi horum, non sua sit culpa, vidisseque errorem gravius peccatum sit, quam commisisse.*"



*Sed inveni tamen etiam qui veri quam suae gloriae studiosiores non solum aequo animo et dissensionem et reprehensionem ferrent, verum etiam ingenue confiterentur errorem, atque adeo gratias agerent monenti.*" In act such persons, I am afraid, are rare; though in profession it is common enough to find people consenting to the declaration with which Sir Thomas Brown closes his Preface: "We shall only take notice of such, whose experimental and judicious knowledge shall solemnly look upon our work, not only to destroy of ours, but to establish of his own; not to traduce or extenuate, but to explain and dilucidate, to add and amplify. —Unto whom we shall not contentiously rejoin, or only to justify our own, but to applaud or confirm his maturer assertions; and shall confer what is in us unto his name and honour, ready to be swallowed in any worthy enlarger, as having acquired our end, if any way, or under any name, we may obtain a work so much desired, and yet desiderated of truth."

But it is no way surprising that abstract truth should kick the beam, when weighed against any personal prejudice or predilection; seeing that, even in things of more immediate human interest, we are often beguiled by our selfishness into desiring, not that which is desirable in itself, but that which we have in some manner associated with our vanity and our personal credit. If a misfortune which a man has prognosticated, befalls his friend, the monitor, instead of sympathizing

and condoling with him, will often exclaim with a taunting tone of triumph: *Didn't I tell you so? Another time you'll take my advice...* as if any one would be willing to take advice from so coldhearted and unfriendly a counsellor. There are those too, I am afraid, who would rather see their neighbours suffer, than their own forebodings fail. Jonah is not the only prophet of evil, whom it has *displeased exceedingly*, and who has been *very angry*, because *God is a gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth Him of the evil*. The beautiful apologue of the gourd is still, and, I fear, ever will be, applicable to many. Indeed what are our most cherisht pleasures, for the loss of which we are the angriest, *even unto death?* but commonly such gourds, *for which we have not laboured, nor made them grow, which came up in a night, and perisht in a night*. On them we *have pity*, because they were a *shadow over our heads to deliver us from our griefs*, and because their withering exposes us to the sun and wind. Yet let a man once have turned his face against his brethren,—and that, not for the wickedness of their hands or of their hearts, but merely for their holding some opinion or doctrine which he deems erroneous: it is not unlikely that he will be loth to see Nineveh spared, *that great city, wherein are more than six-score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand, and also much cattle.*

U.

The last words of the foregoing quotation remind me, that, in estimating the motives for and against any measure or measures, we rarely, if ever, look beyond the manner in which men will be affected thereby. Our lordly eyes cannot stoop to notice the happiness or misery of the animals beneath us. Indeed no one, except God, cares for more than a small particle of the universe. In reckoning up the horrors of war, we never think about the sufferings of the *much cattle*. I shall not forget a deserved rebuke which I received years ago from William Schlegel. He had been speaking of entering Leipsic on the day after the battle; and I asked him whether it was not a glorious moment, thoughtlessly, or rather thinking of the grand consequences which sprang from that victory, more than of the scene itself. *Glorious!* he exclaimed: *how could anybody think about glory, when crossing a plain covered for miles with thousands of his brethren, dead and dying? And what to me was still more piteous, was the sight of the poor horses lying about so helplessly and patiently, uttering deep groans of agony, with no one to do anything for them.*

Among the heroic features in the character of our great commander, none,—except that sense of duty which in him is ever foremost, and throws all things else into the shade,—is grander than the sorrow for his companions who have fallen, which seems almost to overpower every other feeling, even in the flush of a victory. The conqueror

of Bonaparte at Waterloo wrote on the day after, the 19th of June, to the Duke of Beaufort: "The losses we have sustained, have quite broken me down; and I have no feeling for the advantages we have acquired." On the same day too he wrote to Lord Aberdeen: "I cannot express to you the regret and sorrow with which I look round me, and contemplate the loss which I have sustained, particularly in your brother. The glory resulting from such actions, so dearly bought, is no consolation to me; and I cannot suggest it as any to you and his friends: but I hope that it may be expected that this last one has been so decisive, as that no doubt remains that our exertions and our individual losses will be rewarded by the early attainment of our just object. It is then that the glory of the actions in which our friends and relations have fallen, will be some consolation for their loss." He who could write thus, had already gained a greater victory than that of Waterloo: and the less naturally follows the greater. u.

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Most men work for the present, a few for the future. The wise work for both, for the future in the present, and for the present in the future. u.

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There are great men enough to incite us to aim at true greatness, but not enough to make us fancy that God could not execute His purposes without them.

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Man's works, even in their most perfect form, always have more or less of excitement in them. God's works are calm and peaceful, both in Nature, and in His word. Hence Wordsworth, who is above all men the poet of Nature, seldom excites the feelings, because he is so true to his subject. a.

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Crimes sometimes shock us too much; vices almost always too little.

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As art sank at Rome, comforts increast. Witness the baths of Caracalla and Diocletian.

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We sever what God has joined, and so destroy beauty, and lose hold of truth. a.

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It is quite right there should be an Inquisition. It is quite right there should be *autos-da-fé*. The more the better, if they are but real ones. There should be an Inquisition and *autos-da-fé* in every country, yea, in every town, yea, on every hearth, yea, in every heart. The evil hitherto has been that they have been far too few. Every man ought to be an inquisitor; every man ought to perform *autos-da-fé*; often accompanied by death, not seldom by torture. Only his inquisition should be over himself; only his *autos-da-fé* should consist in the slaying of his own lusts and passions, in the fiery sacrifice of his own stubborn, unbelieving will.

These would be truly *autos-da-fé*. It is no act

of faith for me to offer up another as a victim. On the contrary it is an act of unbelief. It shews I have no faith in my brother's spiritual nature. It shews I have no faith in the power of God to work upon his heart and change it. It shews I have no faith in the sword of the Spirit, but hold the sword of the flesh to be mightier.

Nor again can Faith exist in opposition to Love. Faith is the root of Love, the root without which Love cannot have any being. At times the root may be found, where the plant has not yet grown up to perfection. But no hatred, or other evil, malign passion can spring from the root of Faith. Wherever they are found, they grow from unbelief, from want of faith,—from want of faith in man, and from want of faith in God.

Moreover such *autos-da-fé* would be sure of effecting their purpose, which the others never can. They would be acceptable to God. They would destroy what ought to be destroyed. And were we diligent in performing them, there would be no need of any others.

This Inquisition should be set up in every soul. In some indeed it may at times be in abeyance. The happiest spirits are those by whom the will of God is done without effort or struggle. To this angelic nature however humanity can only approximate, and that too not at once, but by divers steps and stages, at every one of which new *autos-da-fé* are required.

U.

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Some people seem to think that Death is the only reality in Life. Others, happier and rightlier minded, see and feel that Life is the true reality in Death. u.

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*Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.* Is it indeed so? Alas then for England! For surely we profess to serve both; and few can doubt that we do indeed serve one of the two, as zealously and assiduously as he himself can wish. But how must it be with our service to the other? u.

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They who boast of their tolerance, merely give others leave to be as careless about religion as they are themselves. A walrus might as well pride itself on its endurance of cold.

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Few persons have courage enough to appear as good as they really are. a.

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The praises of others may be of use, in teaching us, not what we are, but what we ought to be. a.

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Many people make their own God; and he is much what the French may mean, when they talk of *le bon Dieu*,—very indulgent, rather weak, near at hand when we want anything, but far away out of sight when we have a mind to do wrong. Such a god is as much an idol as if he were an image of stone.

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The errors of the good are often very difficult to eradicate, from being founded on mistaken views of duty. a.

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Truly a river is a very wilful thing, going as it will, and where it will.

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How should men ever change their religion? In its abasement honour prevents them, in its prosperity contempt. From their heights they cannot see, because they are so high. In their lowliness they dare not see, because they are too lowly.

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There is no being eloquent for atheism. In that exhausted receiver the mind cannot use its wings,—the clearest proof that it is out of its element.

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How different are summer storms from winter ones! In winter they rush over the earth with all their violence; and if any poor remnants of foliage or flowers have lingered behind, these are swept along at one gust. Nothing is left but desolation; and long after the rain has ceased, pools of water and mud bear token of what has been. But when the clouds have poured out their torrents in summer, when the winds have spent their fury, and the sun breaks forth again in its glory, all things seem to rise with renewed loveliness from their refreshing bath. The flowers glistening



with raindrops smell sweeter than before; the grass seems to have gained another brighter shade of green; and the young plants, which had hardly come into sight, have taken their place among their fellows in the borders; so quickly have they sprung up under the showers. The air too, which may previously have been oppressive, is become clear and soft and fresh.

Such too is the difference, when the storms of affliction fall on hearts unrenewed by Christian faith, and on those who abide in Christ. In the former they bring out the dreariness and desolation, which may before have been unapparent. The gloom is not relieved by the prospect of any cheering ray to follow it, of any flowers or fruit to shew its beneficence. But in the truly Christian soul, *though weeping endure for a night, joy comes in the morning*. A sweet smile of hope and love follows every tear; and tribulation itself is turned into the chief of blessings. a.

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We never know the true value of friends. While they live, we are too sensitive of their faults; when we have lost them, we only see their virtues. A.

So however ought it to be. When the perishable shrine has crumbled away, what can we see, except that which alone is imperishable? U.

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How few are our real wants! and how easy is it to satisfy them! Our imaginary ones are boundless and insatiable. A.

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The king is the least independent man in his dominions,—the beggar the most so. A.

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*Multa fiunt eadem sed aliter*, Quintilian (II. 20. 10) has justly remarkt. I have spoken above (p. 148) of the efficacy of manner in oratory; and every attentive observer must perpetually have noticed its inestimable importance in all the occasions and concerns of social life. So great indeed is its power, and so much more do people in general value what their friend feels for them, than what he does for them, that there are few who would not look on you more kindly, if you were to meet their request with an affectionate denial, than with a cold compliance.

Nay, even when the materials are the very same, and when they are arranged in the selfsame order, much will depend on the manner in which they are combined and group't into separate units. *An ice-house* is very different from a *nice house*; and a dot will turn a million into one.

A like thought is exprest in the following stanza, which closes a poem prefixt by Thomas Newton to *the Mirror for Magistrates*.

Certes this world a stage may well be called,  
Whereon is plaid the part of every wight:  
Some, now aloft, anon with malice galled  
Are from high state brought into dismal plight.  
Like counters are they, which stand now in sight  
For thousand or ten thousand, and anon  
Removed stand perhaps for less than one. U.

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The mind is like a trunk. If well packt, it holds almost everything; if ill packt, next to nothing.

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To say *No* with a good grace is a hard matter. To say *Yes* with a good grace is sometimes still harder, at least for men. With women perhaps it may be otherwise. I wonder how many have married for no other reason, than that they had not the strength of mind to say *No*. U.

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Discipline, like the bridle in the hand of a good rider, should exercise its influence without appearing to do so, should be ever active, both as a support and as a restraint, yet seem to lie easily in hand. It must always be ready to check or to pull up, as occasion may require; and only when the horse is a runaway, should the action of the curb be perceptible. A.

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Many expressions, once apt and emphatic, have been so rubbed and worn away by long usage, that they retain as little substance as the skeletons of wheels which have made the grand tour on the Continent. They glide at length like smoke through a chimney, not even impinging against the roof of the mouth; and after a month's repetition they leave nothing behind more solid or more valuable than soot. Words gradually lose their character, and, from being the tokens and exponents of thoughts, become mere air-propelling sounds. To counteract this disastrous tendency, Boyle, it is

said, never uttered the name of God, without bowing his head. Such practices are indeed liable to mischievous abuse: a superstitious value will be attacht to the outward act, even when it is separated from the inward and spiritual: and it is too well known that the eyes have often been ogling a lover, while the fingers have been telling Ave-Maries on a rosary. It may be too, that, among the educated, listlessness of mind is rather encouraged by any recurring formal motion of the body. Else there is a value in whatever may help us to preserve the freshness and elasticity of our feelings, and enable the heart to leap up at the sight of a rainbow in manhood and in old age, as it did in childhood. Even the faults of our much abused climate are thus in many respects blessings. They give a liveliness to our enjoyment of a fine day, such as cannot be felt between the Tropics.

How then is our nature to be fitted for the joys of Paradise? How can we be happy unceasingly, without ceasing to be happy? How is satisfaction to be disentangled from satiety? which now palls upon the heart and intellect, almost as much as upon the senses. A strange and potent transformation must be wrought in us. Our hearts must no longer be capricious: our imaginations must no longer be vagrant: our wills must no longer be wilful.

The process by which this transformation is to be brought about, is set forth by Butler in his excellent chapter, the most valuable perhaps in the

whole *Analogy*, on a State of Moral Discipline; where he shews that, while passive impressions grow weaker by repetition, "practical habits are formed and strengthened by repeated acts." So that the true preparation for heaven is a life of godliness on earth. At the same time we should remember how, as Milton says with characteristic grandeur in the first chapter of his *Reason of Church-Government*, "it is not to be conceived that those eternal effluences of sanctity and love in the glorified saints should be confined and cloyed with repetition of that which is prescribed, but that our happiness may orb itself into a thousand vagancies of glory and delight, and with a kind of eccentrical equation be, as it were, an invariable planet of joy and felicity." u.

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Whatever is the object of our constant attention will naturally be the chief object of our interest. Even the feelings of speculative men become speculative. They care about the notions of things, and their abstractions, and their relations, far more than about the realities. Thus an author's blood will turn to ink. Words enter into him, and take possession of him; and nothing can obtain admission except through the passport of words. He cannot admire anything, until he has had time to reflect and throw back its cold, inanimate image from the mirror of his Understanding, blind to every shape but a shadow, deaf to every sound but an echo. Inverting the legitimate process, he

regards things as the symbols of words, instead of words as the symbols of things. u.

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Literary dissipation is no less destructive of sympathy with the living world, than sensual dissipation. Mere intellect is as hard-hearted and as heart-hardening as mere sense; and the union of the two, when uncontrolled by the conscience, and without the softening, purifying influences of the moral affections, is all that is requisite to produce the diabolical ideal of our nature. Nor is there any repugnance in either to coalesce with the other: witness Iago, Tiberius, Borgia. u.

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The body too has its rights; and it will have them. They cannot be trampled upon or slighted without peril. The body ought to be the soul's best friend, and cordial, dutiful helpmate. Many of the studious however have neglected to make it so; whence a large part of the miseries of authorship. Some good men have treated it as an enemy; and then it has become a fiend, and has plagued them, as it did Antony. u.

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The balance of powers in the human constitution has been subverted by that divorce between the body and the mind, which has often ensued from the seductive influences of Civilization. The existence of one class of society has been rendered almost wholly corporeal, that of the other almost solely intellectual,—but intellectual in the lowest sense

of the word, and so that the intellect has been degraded into a caterer for the wants and pleasures of the body, instead of devoting itself to its rightful purposes, the pursuit, the enforcement, and the exhibition of Truth. Moreover the pernicious, debilitating tendencies of bodily pleasure need to be counteracted by the invigorating exercises of bodily labour; whereas bodily labour without bodily pleasure converts the body into a mere machine, and brutifies the soul. v.

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What a loss is that of the village-green! It is a loss to the picturesque beauty of our English landscapes. A village-green is almost always a subject for a painter, who is fond of quiet home scenes, with its old, knotty, wide-spreading oak or elm or ash, its grey church-tower, its cottages scattered in pleasing disorder around, each looking out of its leafy nest, its flock of geese sailing to and fro across it. Where such spots are still found, they refresh the wayworn traveler, wearied by the interminable hedge-walls with which "restless ownership,"—to use an expression of Wordsworth's,—excludes profane feet from its domain consecrated to Mammon.

The main loss however is that to the moral beauty of our landscapes, that to the innocent, wholesome pleasures of the poor. The village-green was the scene of their sports, of their games. It was the playground for their children. It served for trapball, for cricket, for manly,

humanizing amusements, in which the gentry and farmers might unite with the peasantry. How dreary is the life of the English husbandman now ! "double, double toil and trouble," day after day, month after month, year after year, uncheered by sympathy, unenlivened by a smile, sunless, moonless, starless. He has no place to be merry in but the beershop, no amusements but drunken brawls, nothing to bring him into innocent, cheerful fellowship with his neighbours. The stories of village sports sound like legends of a mythical age, prior to the time when "sabbathless Satan," as Charles Lamb has so happily termed him, set up his throne in the land.

It would be a good thing, if our landed proprietors would try to remedy some of the evils which the ravenous lust of property has wrought in England during the last century. It would be well, if by the side of every village two or three acres were redeemed from the gripe of Mammon, and thrown open to the poor, — if they were taught that their betters, as we presume to call ourselves, take thought about other things, beside the most effectual method of draining the last drop from the sweat of their brows. Something at least should be done to encourage and foster the domestic affections among the lower orders, to make them feel that they too have a home, and that a home is the dearest spot upon earth. I do not mean, by instituting prizes for those whose cottages are the neatest, or by



giving rewards for good behaviour to the best husbands and wives, the best sons and daughters. Such rewards, unless there be something of playful humour connected with them, as was the case with the old flitch of bacon, do far more harm than good, by robbing virtuous conduct of its sweetness and real worth, turning it into an instrument of covetousness or of vanity. The only reward which is not hurtful, is a kind word, or an approving smile: for this, delightful as it is, is so slight and transient, it can never find place among the motives to exertion.

All that ought to be done, all that can be done beneficially, is to remove hindrances which obstruct good, and facilities and temptations to evil, and to afford opportunities and facilities for quiet, orderly, decorous enjoyment. When encouragement is given, it should be by immediate personal intercourse. The great Christian law of reciprocity extends to the affections also. Indeed with regard to them it is a law of Nature. We cannot gain love and respect from others, unless we treat them with love and respect.

The same reason which calls for the restoration of our village greens, calls no less imperatively in London for the throwing open of the gardens in all the squares. What bright refreshing spots would these be in the midst of our huge brick and stone labyrinth, if we saw them crowded on summer evenings with the tradespeople and mechanics from the neighbouring streets, and if

the poor children, who now grow up amid the filth and impurities of the allies and courts, were allowed to run about these playgrounds, so much healthier both for the body and the mind! We have them all ready: a word may open them. He who looks at the good which has been effected by the alterations in St James Park, he whose heart has been gladdened by the happiness derived from them by young and old, must surely think the widest extension of similar blessings most desirable: and the state of that Park shews that no mischiefs are to be apprehended.

At present the gardens in our squares are painful mementoes of aristocratic exclusiveness. They who need them the least monopolize them. All the fences and walls by which this exclusiveness bars itself out from the sympathies of common humanity, must be cast down. If we do not remove them voluntarily, and in the spirit of love, they will be torn and trodden down ere long perforce, in the spirit of wrath. U.

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It is a blessed thing that we cannot enclose the sky. But who knows? Will not "restless ownership" long in time, like Alexander, for a new world to appropriate? and then a Joint-stock Company will be established to send up balloons for the purpose. Parliament too will doubtless display its boasted omnipotence by passing an Act to grant them a monopoly, commanding the winds to offer them no molestation in their

enterprise, and enjoining that, if any planet be caught trespassing, it shall be impounded, and that all comets shall be committed forthwith for vagrancy.

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v.

*Quaerenda pecunia primum est ; Virtus post nummos.* But that *post* never arrives ; at least it did not at Rome, whatever may be the case in England. The very influx of the *nummi* retarded it, and kept *Virtus* at a distance. In fact she is of a jealous nature, and never comes at all, unless she comes in the first place. That which is a man's *alpha* will also be his *omega* ; and, in advancing from one to the other, his velocity is mostly accelerated at every step.

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v.

Messieurs, Mesdames, voici la vérité. Personne n'écoute. Personne ne s'en soucit. Personne n'en veut. Peut-être on ne m'a pas entendu. Essayons encore une fois. Messieurs, Mesdames, voici la véritable vérité. Elle vient exprès de l'autre monde, pour se montrer à vous. On passe en avant. On s'enfuit. On ne me regarde que pour se moquer de moi. Malheureux que je suis, on me laissera mourir de faim. Que faire donc ? Il faut absolument changer de cri. Messieurs, Mesdames, voici le vrai moyen pour gagner de l'argent. Mondieu ! Quelle foule ! Je ne puis plus. J'étouffe.

C'est une histoire qui est assez commune.

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v.

One now and then meets with people on whose faces, in whose manner, in whose words, one may read a bill giving notice that they are *to be lett or sold*. They also profess to be furnisht: but everybody knows what the furniture of a ready-furnisht house usually is. U.

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Nothing hides a blemish so completely as cloth of gold. This is the first lesson that heirs and heiresses commonly learn. Would that equal pains were taken to convince them, that the having inherited a good cover for blemishes does not entail any absolute necessity of providing blemishes for it to cover!

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*Sauve qui peut!* Bonaparte is said to have exclaimed at Waterloo, along with his routed army. At all events this was the rule by which he regulated his actions, in prosperity as well as in adversity. For what is *Vole qui peut!* but the counterpart of *Sauve qui peut?* And who are they that will cry to the mountains, *Cover us*, and to the rocks, *Fall on us*, but they who have acted on the double-faced rule, *Vole qui peut*, and *Sauve qui peut?*

What an awful and blessed contrast to this cry presents itself, when we think of Him of whom His enemies said, *He saved others: Himself He cannot save!* They knew not how true the first words were, nor how indissolubly they were

connected with the latter, how it is only by losing our life that we can either save others or ourselves.

U.

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Few minds are sun-like, sources of light in themselves and to others. Many more are moons, that shine with a derivative and reflected light. Among the tests to distinguish them is this: the former are always full, the latter only now and then, when their suns are shining full upon them.

U.

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*Hold thy peace!* says Wisdom to Folly. *Hold thy peace!* replies Folly to Wisdom.

*Fly!* cries Light to Darkness: and Darkness echoes back, *Fly!*

The latter chase has been going on since the beginning of the world, without an inch of ground gained on either side. May we believe that the result has been different in the contest between Wisdom and Folly?

U.

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People have been sounding the alarm for many years past all over Europe against what they call *obscurantism* and *obscurantists*; that is, against a supposed plot to extinguish all the new lights of our days, and to draw down the night of the middle ages on the awakening eyes of mankind. That such plans, mad as they may appear, are not too mad for those who live in a world of dreams,—that there are human bats, who, having ventured

out into the daylight, fly back scared to their dark haunts, and would have all men follow them thither,—we know by sad recent examples. But, even without this special cause, the alarm is timely: indeed it can never be out of time. For the true *obscurantists* are the passions, the prejudices, the blinding delusions of our nature, warped by evil habits and self-indulgence; the real *obscurantism* is bigotry, in all its forms, which are many, and even opposite. There is the Pharisaic obscurantism, which would put out the earthly lights, and the Sadducean, which would put out the heavenly: and these, in times of peril, when they are trembling for their beloved darkness, combine and conspire. Nor has any class of men been busier in this way, than many of those who have boasted loudly of being the enlighteners of their age. In fact they who brag of their tolerance, have often been among the fiercest bigots, and worse than their opponents, from deeming themselves better.

U.

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If your divines are not philosophers, your philosophy will neither be divine, nor able to divine.

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No animal continues so long in a state of infancy as man; no animal is so long before it can stand. And is not this still truer of our souls than of our bodies? For when are they out of their infancy? when can they be said to stand?

Yet, till they can, how much do they need a strong hand to uphold them !

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Alas for the exalted of the earth, that oversight is oversight !

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Many a man has lost being a great man by splitting into two middling ones. Atone yourself to the best of your power ; and then Christ will atone for you.

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Be what you are. This is the first step toward becoming better than you are. u.

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Age seems to take away the power of acting a character, even from those who have done so the most successfully during the main part of their lives. The real man will appear, at first fitfully, and then predominantly. Time spares the chiseled beauty of stone and marble, but makes sad havock in plaster and stucco. μ.

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The truth of this remark has been especially evinced in France, owing to the prevalent artificialness of the French character. Hence the want of dignity in old age, noticed above (p. 216). Of course too this deficiency has been most conspicuous upon the throne of the *Grand Monarque*, even down to the present times. In this respect at least Bonaparte was a thorough Frenchman. Huge events succeeded each other in his life so rapidly,

that he lived through years in months; and adversity tore off the mask from him, which age cracks and splits in others.

We have the heavenly assurance that *the path of the just is to shine more and more unto the perfect day*. But this blessed truth involves its opposite, that the path of the wicked must grow darker and darker unto the total night . . . unless he give heed to the voice which calls him out of his darkness, and turn to the light which is ever striving to illumine it. u.

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Self-depreciation is not humility, though often mistaken for it. Its source is oftener mortified pride. a.

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The corruption and perversity of the world, which should be our strongest stimulants to do what we can to remove and correct them, are often pleaded by the religious as excuses for withdrawing from the world and doing nothing. How unlike is this to the example of Him, who *concluded all under sin*, that He might have mercy upon all, that He might take their sinful nature upon Him, to purify it from its sinfulness! a.

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How oft the heart, when wrapt in passion's arms,  
Reels, by the tumult stunned, or conscience-wounded,  
Or deafened with the trumpet-tongued alarms  
The victim's selfdevotedness has sounded!

What then remains? a gust of half-enjoyments,  
That, twisting memory to a vain regret,  
Prepares for age that saddest of employments,  
A desperate endeavour to forget.



Help, help us, Spirit of Good! and, hither gliding,  
 Bring, on the wings of Jesus intercession,  
 The fiery sword o'er Eden's tree presiding,  
 To guard our tempted fancies from transgression.

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The devils, we are told, *believe and tremble*.  
 Our part is to believe and love. But it is hard to  
 convince people that nothing short of this can be  
 true Christian faith. So, because they are some-  
 times terrified by the thought of God, they fancy  
 they believe, though their hearts are far away from  
 Him. a.

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At the end of a hot summer, the children in the  
 streets look almost as pale and parched as the grass  
 in the fields: and every object one sees may sug-  
 gest profitable meditations on the incapacity of all  
 things earthly, be they human, animal, or vege-  
 table, to support unmixed, uninterrupted sunshine  
 ...a truth which the sands of Africa teach as  
 demonstratively, as the Polar ice teaches the  
 converse. u.

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The story of Amphion sets forth how, whatever  
 we may have to build, be it a house, a city, or a  
 church, the most powerful of all powers that we  
 can employ in building it, is harmony and love.  
 Only the love must be of a genuine, lasting kind,  
 not a spirit of weak compromise, sacrificing prin-  
 ciples to expedients, and abandoning truths for the  
 sake of tying a loveknot of errors, but strong

from being in unison with what alone is true and lasting, the will and word of God. Else the bricks will fall out, as quickly as they have fallen in.

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v.

Philosophy cannot raise the bulk of mankind up to her level: therefore, if she is to become popular, she must descend to theirs. This she cannot do without a twofold grave injury. She will debase herself, and will puff up her disciples. She will no longer dwell on high, beside the primal sources of truth, uttering her voice from thence, pouring the streams of wisdom among the masses of mankind. She will come down, and set up a company to supply their houses with water at a cheap rate. Whereupon ensues the blessing of competition between rival Philosophies, each striving to be more popular, that is, more superficial than the others. In such a state of things, it is almost fortunate if the name of Philosophy be usurpt by Science, which, as dealing with outward things, may with less degradation be adapted to material wants, and from which it is easier to draw practical results, without holding deep communings with primary principles.

There is only one way in which Philosophy can truly become popular, that which Socrates tried, and which centuries after was perfected in the Gospel,—that which tells men of their divine origin and destiny, of their heavenly duties and calling. This comes home to men's hearts and bosoms, and,

instead of puffing them up, humbles them. But to be efficient, this should flow down straight from a higher sphere. Even in its Socratic form, it was supported by those higher principles, which we find set forth with such power and beauty by Plato. In Christian Philosophy on the other hand, the ladder has come down from heaven, and the angels are continually descending and ascending along it. Were this heavenly ladder withdrawn or cut off, our Philosophy,—that part of it which sallied beyond the pale of empirical Psychology and formal Logic,—would become mere vulgar gossip about Expediency, Utility, and the various other nostrums for diluting and medicating evil until it turns into good. u.

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In the lower realms of Nature, all things are subject to uniform, unvarying, calculable laws. To these laws they submit with unswerving obedience; so that with regard to the heavenly bodies we can tell what has been thousands of years ago, and what will be thousands of years hence, with the nicest precision. As we enter into the regions of Life, we seem also to enter into the regions of Chance. We can no longer predicate with the same confidence concerning individuals, but are obliged to limit our conclusions to genera and species. Still there is a universal order, a manifest sequence of cause and effect, a prevailing congruity and harmony, until we mount up to man. But when we make man the object of our

observations and speculations, whether as he exists in the present world, or as he is set before us in the records of history, inconsistencies, incongruities, contradictions are so common, that we rather wonder when we find an instance of strict consistency, of undeviating conformity to any law or principle. Disorder at first sight seems the only order, discord the only harmony. Yet we may not doubt that here also there is an order and a harmony, working itself out, although our faculties are not capable of apprehending it, and though the calculus has hitherto transcended our powers. At all events, to adopt the image used by Bacon in a passage quoted above (p. 39), if we hear little else than a dissonant screeching of multitudinous noises now, which only blend in the distance into a roar like that of the raging sea, it behoves us to hold fast to the assurance that this is the necessary process whereby the instruments are to be tuned for the heavenly consort. Though Chaos may only have been driven out of a part of his empire as yet, that empire is undergoing a perpetual curtailment; and in the end he will be cast out of the intellectual and moral and spiritual world, as entirely as out of the material. v.

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It would be very strange, unless inconsistencies and contradictions were thus common in the history of mankind, that the operation of Mathematical Science,—emanating as it does wholly from the Reason, and incapable of moving a step except

so far as it is supported by the laws of the Reason,—should have been, both in England and France, to undermine the empire of the power from which it proceeds, and which alone can render it stable and certain. Such however has been the fact; and it has been brought about in divers ways.

Attempts were made to subject moral and spiritual truths to the selfsame processes, which were found to hold good in the material world, but against which they revolted as incompatible with their free nature. Then that which would not submit to the same strict logical formulæ, was treated as an outcast from the domain of Reason, and handed over to the empirical Understanding, which judges of expediency, and utility, and the adaptation of means to ends. Sometimes too this faculty, which at best is only the prime minister of Reason, its *Maire du Palais*, was confounded with and supplanted it.

Hence the name itself grew to be abused and wholly misapplied. A man who fashions his conduct so as to fit all the windings of the world, and who moreover has the snowball's talent of gathering increase at every step, is called a very *reasonable* man. He on the other hand, who devotes himself to the service of some idea breathed into him by the Reason, and who in his zeal for this forgets to make friends with the Mammon of Unrighteousness,—he who desires and demands that the hearts and minds of his neighbours should be

brought into conformity to the supreme laws of the Reason, and that the authority of these laws should be recognised in the councils of nations,—is by all accounted most *unreasonable*, and by many pitied as half mad.

It may be that this was the natural, and for a time irrepressible consequence, when Mathematics enlisted among the retainers of Commerce, and when the abstractions of Geometry, being employed among the principles of mechanical construction, could thus be turned to account, and were therefore eagerly embraced for purposes of trade. Profitable Science cast unprofitable Science into the background: she was ashamed of her poorer sister, and denied her. The multitude, the half-thinking, half-taught multitude have always been idolatrous. In order to be roused out of their inert torpour, they require some visible, tangible effigy of that which cannot be seen or toucht. Thus the same perverseness, which led men to worship the creature instead of the Creator, led them also to set up Utility as the foundation of Morality, and to substitute the occasional rules and the variable maxims of the Understanding for the eternal laws and principles of the Reason. v.

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We ask, what is the use of a thing? Our forefathers askt, what is it good for? They saw far beyond us. A thing may seem, and even to a certain extent be useful, without being good: it

cannot be good, without being useful. The two qualities do indeed always coincide in the end: but the worth of a criterion is to be simple, plain, and as nearly certain as may be. Now that which a man in a sound and calm mind sincerely deems good, always is so: that which he may deem useful, may often be mischievous, nay, I believe, mostly will be so, unless some reference to good be introduced into the solution of the problem. For no mind ever sailed steadily, without moral principle to ballast and right it.

Besides, when you have ascertained what is good, you are already at the goal; to which Utility will only lead you by a long and devious circuit, where at every step you risk losing your way. You may abuse and misuse: you cannot ungood. v.

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So far is the calculation of consequences from being an infallible, universal criterion of Duty, that it never can be so in any instance. Only when the voice of Duty is silent, or when it has already spoken, may we allowably think of the consequences of a particular action, and calculate how far it is likely to fulfill what Duty has enjoined, either by its general laws, or by a specific edict on this occasion. But Duty is above all consequences, and often, at a crisis of difficulty, commands us to throw them overboard. *Fiat Justitia ; pereat Mundus.* It commands us to look neither to the right, nor to the left, but straight onward.

Hence every signal act of Duty is altogether an act of Faith. It is performed in the assurance that God will take care of the consequences, and will so order the course of the world, that, whatever the immediate results may be, His word shall not return to him empty. u.

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It is much easier to think right without doing right, than to do right without thinking right. Just thoughts may, and wofully often do fail of producing just deeds; but just deeds are sure to beget just thoughts. For, when the heart is pure and straight, there is hardly anything which can mislead the understanding in matters of immediate personal concernment. But the clearest understanding can do little in purifying an impure heart, the strongest little in straightening a crooked one. You cannot reason or talk an Augean stable into cleanliness. A single day's work would make more progress in such a task than a century's words.

Thus our Lord's blessing on knowledge is only conditional: *If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them* (John xiii. 17). But to action His promise is full and certain: *If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it is of God.* John vii. 17. u.

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One of the saddest things about human nature is, that a man may guide others in the path of life,



without walking in it himself; that he may be a pilot, and yet a castaway. u.

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The original principle of lots is a reliance on the immediate, ever-present, all-ruling providence of God, and on His interposition to direct man's judgement, when it is at a fault. The same was the principle of trials by ordeal. But here, as in so many other cases, the practice long outlasted the principle which had prompted it. Although the soul fled ages ago, the body still cumpers the ground, and poisons the air. Duels, in which a point of honour is allowed to sanction revenge and murder, have taken the place of the ancient judicial combats; and, after losing the belief which in some measure justified the religious lotteries of our ancestors, we betook ourselves to mercenary lotteries in their stead. The motive was no longer to obtain justice, but to obtain money,—the principle, confidence, not in all-seeing, all-regulating Wisdom, but in blind, all-confounding Chance. u.

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The greatest truths are the simplest: and so are the greatest men. u.

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There are some things in which we may well envy the members of the Church of Rome,—in nothing more than in the reverence which they feel for whatever has been consecrated to the service of their religion. It may be, that they often confound the sign with the thing signified,

and merge the truth in the symbol. We on the other hand, in our eagerness to get rid of the signs, have not been careful enough to preserve the things signified. We have sometimes hurt the truth, in stripping off the symbols it was clothed in.

For instance, they can allow their churches to stand open all day long; and the reverence felt by the whole people for the house of God is their pledge that nobody will dare to rob or injure it. The want of such a reverence in England is perhaps in the main an offset from that superstitious hatred of superstition and idolatry which was so prevalent among the Puritans, through which they would drag the Communion-table into the middle of the nave, and turn it into a seat for the lowest part of the congregation, and would seem almost to have fancied that, because God has no regard for earthly beauty or splendour, He must needs look with special favour on meanness and filth,—that, as He does not respect what man respects, He must respect what man is offended by. The multitude of our sects too, which, if they agree in little else, are nearly unanimous in their hostility to the National Church, has done much to impair the reverence for her buildings; more especially since the practical exclusion of the lower orders from the ministry, while almost all the functions connected with religion are exercised by the clergy alone, has in a manner driven those among the

lower orders, who have felt a calling to labour in the work of the Gospel, into societies where they could find a field for their activity and zeal.

In fact this prejudice, as it is termed, has shared the same fate with our other prejudices,—that is, with those sentiments, whether evil or good, the main source of which lies in the affections,—and has been trampled under foot and crushed by the tyrannous despotism of the Understanding. Not that the Understanding has emancipated us from prejudices. Liable as it is to err, even more so perhaps than any of our other faculties,—or at all events more self-satisfied and obstinate in its errors,—our prejudices have only lost what was kindly and pleasing about them, and have become more inveterate, and consequently more hurtful; because the bias and warp which the Understanding receives, is now caused solely by selfishness and self-will; whereby it becomes more prone than ever to look askance on all things connected with the ideal and imaginative, the heroic and religious parts of our nature.

How fraught with error and mischief our present systems of Moral Philosophy are, may be perceived from the tone of feeling prevalent with regard to such matters, even among the intelligent and the young. I was at a party the other day, where the recent act of sacrilege in King's College Chapel (in 1816) became the subject of conversation. An opinion was expressed, that, if a man must rob, it is better he should rob a church

than a dwelling-house. I lookt on this as nothing else than one of those paradoxes, which ingenious men are ever starting, whether for the sake of saying something strange, or to provoke a discussion ; and for which therefore their momentariness and unpremeditatedness are mostly a sufficient excuse. Still, deeming it a rash and dangerous intrusion on holy ground, I took up my parable against it. To my astonishment I found that the opinion of every person present was opposed to mine. It was their deliberate conviction, resting, they conceived, on grounds of the soundest philosophy, that to rob a church is better than to rob a dwelling-house. The argument on which this conviction was based, may easily be guesst : for of course there was but one,—on which all rang the changes,—that a man who robs a dwelling-house runs a risk of being led to commit murder ; whereas robbing a church is *only* robbing a church. *Only* robbing a church ! Let us look, what is the real nature and tendency of the act, which is thus puft aside by the help of this little word, *only*.

In doing so I will waive all such considerations as are drawn mainly from the feelings. I will not insist on the cowardliness of plundering what has been left without defense, or on the treacherousness of violating that confidence in the probity of the people, which leaves our churches unguarded ; although both these considerations add a moral force to the legal enactments against horse-stealing,

and would justify them, if they wanted any further justification than their obvious necessity. Nor will I urge the moral turpitude of being utterly destitute of that reverence, which every Christian, without disparagement to his intellectual freedom, may reasonably be expected to entertain for objects sanctified by the holy uses they are devoted to. Notwithstanding my persuasion of the inherent wisdom of our moral affections, I will pass by all the arguments with which they would furnish me, and will agree to look at the question merely as a matter of policy, but of policy on the highest and widest scale, in the assurance that, if the affairs of men are indeed ordered and directed by an All-wise Providence, the paths of moral duty and of political expediency will always be found to be one and the same.

If however we are to test the evil of an act, not by that which lies in it, and which it essentially involves,—by the outrage it commits against our moral feelings, by its violation of the laws of the Conscience,—but by its consequences ; at all events we should look at those consequences which spring from it naturally and necessarily, not at those which have no necessary, though they may have an accidental and occasional connexion with it, like that of murder with robbery in a dwelling-house. Now it is an axiom of all civil wisdom, which, confirmed as it is by the experience of ages, and by the testimony of every sage statesman and philosopher, it would be a waste of time

here to establish by argument, that, without religion, no civil society can subsist. That is to say, unless the great mass of a nation are united by some one predominant feeling, which blends and harmonizes the diversities of individual character, represses and combines the waywardnesses of individual wills, and forms a centre, around which all their deeper feelings may cluster and coalesce, no nation can continue for a succession of generations as one body corporate, or a single whole. There may indeed be many diversities, and even conflicting repugnances among sects; but there must be a religious feeling spreading through the great body of the people; and that religious feeling must in the main be one and the same: it must have the same groundwork of faith, the same objects of reverence and fear and love: else the nation will merely be a combination of discordant units, that will have no hearty, lasting bond of union, and may split into atoms at any chance blow. A proof of this is supplied by the dismal condition of Ireland: for, though the opposite forms of Christianity which have prevailed there, have so much in common, that, notwithstanding the further instance of Germany to the contrary, one cannot pronounce it impossible for them to coalesce into a national unity, the effect hitherto has only been endless contention and strife. Therefore whatever violates or shakes the religious feelings of a nation, is an assault on the very foundations of its existence. But that every act of sacrilege, unless it

be visited by general abhorrence, must weaken and sap these religious feelings, will hardly be questioned. Wherever such feelings exist, an act of sacrilege must needs be regarded as an outrage against everything sacred, and must be reprobated and punished as such. Although it is not directly an outrage against human life, it is one against that which gives human life its highest dignity and preciousness, that without which human life would be worth little more than the life of other animals. Hence, of all crimes, it is the most injurious to the highest interests of the nation.

Besides, should sacrilege become at all common, —which may God in mercy to our country avert! —it would be necessary to station a watchman or sentry to guard all our churches, or else to remove everything valuable contained in them, as soon as the congregation disperses. And what a brand of ignominy would it be to us among the nations of Christendom, that we are such inborn, ingrained thieves, as to be unable to restrain the itching of our hands even in the holy temples of our religion! What a confession of shame would it be, that, in the consciousness of this incurable disease, we had been forced to legislate for the sake of checking the increase of this our bosom sin, and had taken a lesson from the pot-houses, to which the refuse of the people resort, and where the knives and forks are chained to the table! that we should be unable to trust ourselves, to put the slightest trust in our own

honesty, even when religion is superadded to the ordinary motives for preserving it! Yet, if we have learnt any lesson from our own history, and from that of the world, it should be, that the most precious part of a nation's possessions, no less than of an individual's, is its character: wherefore he who damages that character, is guilty of treason against his country. The only protection which a nation, without signing its own shame-warrant, can grant to the altars of its religion, is by inflicting the severest punishment on those who dare to violate them. They ought to be their own potent safeguard. A dwelling-house is protected by its inmates; and so ought a church to be protected by the indwelling of the Spirit whom the eye of Faith beholds there.

Moreover burglaries naturally work out their own remedy. Householders become more vigilant; the police is improved; the law is strengthened. But, when Faith is shaken, no outward force can set it up again as firmly as before; and that which rests on it falls to the ground. The outrages committed against the visible building of the church, unless they are arrested, will also prove hurtful to the spiritual Church of Christ. Nine tenths in every nation are unable to distinguish between an object and its attributes, between an idea and the form in which it has usually been manifested, and the associations with which it has ever, and to all appearance indissolubly, been connected. Such abstraction, even in cultivated minds, requires



much watchfulness and attention. The bulk of mankind will not easily understand, how He, whose house may be plundered with impunity, can and ought to be the object of universal reverence, how He can be the Almighty.

I will not speak of the moral corruption which is sure to ensue from the decay of religion in a people. Among the higher and educated classes, we may have divers specious substitutes, in the cultivation of reason and the moral affections, the law of honour and of opinion, which may preserve a decorous exterior of life, even after the primal source of all good in the heart is dried up. But for the lower orders Religion is the only guardian and guide, that can preserve them from being swept along by blind delusions, and the cravings of unsatisfied appetites and passions. If they do not fear God, they will not fear King, or Parliament, or Laws. Whatever does not rest on a heavenly foundation will be overthrown.

Thus, even if a burglary were necessarily to be attended by murder, it would be a less destructive crime to society than sacrilege. Human life should indeed be sacred, on account of the divine spirit enshrined in it. Take away that spirit; and it is worth little more than that of any other animal. For the sake of any moral principle, of any divine truth, it may be sacrificed, and ought to be readily. He who dies willingly in such a cause, is not a suicide, but a martyr. To deem otherwise is *propter vitam vivendi perdere causas*.

So diseased are the appetites of those who live in what is called the fashionable world, that they mostly account Sunday a very dull day, which, with the help of a longer morning sleep, and of an evening nap, and of the Parks, and of the Zoological Gardens, and of looking at their neighbours dresses, and at their own, they contrive, as it only comes once a week, to get through. Yet of all days it is the one on which our highest faculties ought to be employed the most vigorously, and to find the deepest, most absorbing interest.

With somewhat of the same feeling do the lovers of excitement regard a state of peace. It is so stupid; there's no news: no towns have been stormed, no battles fought. We want a little bloodshed, to colour and flavour our lives and our newspaper. How dull must it have been at Rome when the temple of Janus was shut! The Romans however were a lucky people; for that mishap seldom befell them.

It is sad, that, when so many wars are going on unceasingly in all parts of the earth,—the war waged by the mind of man against the powers of Nature in the fulfilment of his mission to subdue them,—the war of Light against Darkness, of Truth against Ignorance and Error,—the war of Good against Evil, in all its numerous forms, political, social, and personal,—it is very sad that we should feel little interest in any form, except that which to the well-being of mankind is commonly the least important.

When I hear or read the vulgar abuse, which is poured out if ever a monk or a convent is mentioned, I am reminded of what the Egyptian king said to the Israelites: *Ye are idle, ye are idle: therefore ye say, Let us go and do sacrifice to the Lord.* To those who know not God, the worship of God is idleness. u.

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Idolatry may be a child of the Imagination; but it is a child that has forgotten its parent. Idolatry is the worship of the visible. It mistakes forms for substances, symbols for realities. It is bodily sight, and mental blindness,—a doting on the outward, occasioned by the want of the poetic faculty. So that Religion has suffered its most grievous injury, not from too much imagination, but from too little.

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The bulk of mankind feel the reality of this world, but have little or no feeling for the reality of the next world. They who, through affliction or some other special cause, have had their hearts withdrawn from the world for a while, and been living in closer communion with God, will sometimes almost cease to feel the reality of this world, and will live mainly in the next. The grand difficulty is to feel the reality of both, so as to give each its due place in our thoughts and feelings, to keep our mind's eye and our heart's eye ever fixt on the Land of Promise, without

looking away from the road along which we are to travel toward it. a.

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To judge of Christianity from the lives of ordinary, nominal Christians is about as just as it would be to judge of tropic fruits and flowers from the produce which the same plants might bring forth in Iceland. a.

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The statue of Memnon poured out its song of joy, when the rays of the morning sun fell upon it: and thus, when the rays of divine Truth first fall on a human soul, it is scarcely possible that something like heavenly music should not issue from its depths. The statue however was of stone: no living voice was awakened in it: the sounds melted and floated away. Alas that the heavenly music drawn from the heart of man should often be no less fleeting than the song of Memnon's statue! u.

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*Seeing is believing*, says the proverb; and most thoroughly is it verified by mankind from childhood upward. Though, of all our senses, the eyes are the most easily deceived, we believe them in preference to any other evidence. We believe them against all other testimony, and often, like Thomas, will not believe without seeing. Hence the peculiar force of the blessing bestowed on those who do not see, and yet believe.

Faith, the Scripture tells us, *comes by hearing*.

For faith is an assurance concerning things which are not seen, concerning things which are beyond the power of sight, nay, in the highest sense, concerning Him whom no man hath seen, and whom His Son, having dwelt in His bosom, has declared to us. Its primary condition is itself an act of faith in a person, in him who speaks to us; whereas seeing is a mere act of sense. u.

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All knowledge, of whatsoever kind, must have a twofold groundwork of faith,—one subjectively, in our own faculties, and the laws which govern them,—the other objectively, in the matter submitted to our observations. We must believe in the being who knows, and in that which is known: knowledge is the copula of these two acts. Even Scepticism must have the former. Its misfortune and blunder is, that it will keep standing on one leg, and so can never get a firm footing. We must stand on both, before we can walk, although the former act is often the more difficult. u.

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Nobody can be responsible for his faith. For how can any one help believing what his understanding tells him is true?

But all teachers of Christianity have believed the contrary.

That is, because they were all insolent and overbearing, and wanted to dogmatize and tyrannize over mankind. Now however that people are grown honester and wiser, and love truth more, they will

no longer bow the knee to the monstrous absurdities which priestcraft imposed on our poor blind ancestors.

Bravo ! you have hit on the very way of proving that a man's moral character has nothing to do with his faith. Plato's of course had nothing.

Why ! his vanity led him to indulge in all sorts of visionary fancies.

Dominic's had nothing.

He was such a bloody ruffian, that he persuaded himself he might make people orthodox by butchering them.

Becket's had nothing.

He believed whatever pampered his own ambition, and that of the Church.

Luther's had nothing.

His temper was so uncontrolled, he believed whatever flattered his passions, especially his hatred of the Pope.

Voltaire's had nothing ; nor Rousseau's ; nor Pascal's ; nor Milton's ; nor Cowper's. All these examples,—and thousands more might be added ; indeed everybody whose heart we could read would be a fresh one,—prove that what a man believes is intimately connected with what he is. His faith is shaped by his moral nature, and shapes it. Pour the same liquid into a sound and a leaky vessel, into a pure and a tainted one, will the contents of the vessels an hour after be precisely the same ?

In fact the sophism I have been arguing against,

— mere sophism in some, half sophism, half blunder in others,—comes from the spawn of that mother-sophism and mother-blunder, which would deny man's moral responsibility altogether, on the ground that his actions do not result from any cause within the range of his power to determine them one way or other, but are wholly the creatures of the circumstances he is placed in, and follow the impulses of those circumstances with the same passive necessity, with which the limbs of a puppet are moved by its wires. v.

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The foundation of domestic happiness is faith in the virtue of woman. The foundation of political happiness is faith in the integrity of man. The foundation of all happiness, temporal and eternal, is faith in the goodness, the righteousness, the mercy, and the love of God. v.

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A loving spirit finds it hard to recognise the duty of preferring truth to love,—or rather of rising above human love, with its shortsighted dread of causing present suffering, and looking at things in God's light, who sees the end from the beginning, and allows His children to suffer, when it is to work out their final good. Above all is the mind that has been renewed with the spirit of self-sacrifice, tempted to overlook the truth, when, by giving up its own ease, it can for the moment lessen the sufferings of another. Yet, for our friend's sake, self ought to be

renounced, in its denials as well as its indulgences. It should be altogether forgotten ; and in thinking what we are to do for our friend, we are not to look merely, or mainly, at the manner in which his feelings will be affected at the moment, but to consider what will on the whole and ultimately be best for him, so far as our judgement can ascertain it. a.

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To suppress the truth may now and then be our duty to others : not to utter a falsehood must always be our duty to ourselves. A.

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A teacher is a kind of intellectual midwife. Many of them too discharge their office after the fashion enjoined on the Hebrew midwives : if they have a son to bring into the world, they kill him ; if a daughter, they let her live. Strength is checkt ; boldness is curbed ; sharpness is blunted ; quickness is clogged ; highth is curtailed and deprest ; elasticity is damp't and trodden down ; early bloom is nipt : feebleness gives little trouble, and excites no fears ; so it is let alone.

How then does Genius ever contrive to escape and gain a footing on this earth of ours.

The birth of Minerva may shew us the way : it springs forth in full armour. As the midwives said to Pharaoh, *It is lively, and is delivered ere the midwives come in.* u.

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Homebred wits are like home-made wines, sweet, luscious, spiritless, without body, and ill to keep. u.

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If a boy loves reading, reward him with a plaything; if he loves sports, with a book. You may easily lead him to value a present made thus, and to shew that he values it by using it.

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The tasks set to children should be moderate. Over-exertion is hurtful both physically and intellectually, and even morally. But it is of the utmost importance that they should be made to fulfill all their tasks correctly and punctually. This will train them for an exact, conscientious discharge of their duties in after life. u.

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A great step is gained, when a child has learnt that there is no necessary connexion between liking a thing and doing it. a.

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By directing a child's attention to a fault, and thus giving it a local habitation and a name, you may often fix it in him more firmly; when, by drawing his thoughts and affections to other things, and seeking to foster an opposite grace, you would be much more likely to subdue it. In like manner a jealous disposition is often strengthened, when notice is taken of it; while the endeavour to cherish a spirit of love would do much toward casting it out. a.

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I saw two oaks standing side by side. The one was already clothed in tender green leaves; the other was still in its wintry bareness, shewing few signs of reviving life. Whence arose this? The influences of the sun and air and sky must have been the same on both trees: their nearness seemed to bespeak a like soil: no outward cause was apparent to account for the difference. It must therefore have been something within, something in their internal structure and organization. But wait a while: in a month or two both the trees will perhaps be equally rich in their summer foliage. Nay, that which is slowest in unfolding its leaves, may then be the most vigorous and luxuriant.

So is it often with children in the same family, brought up under the same influences: while one grows and advances daily under them, another may seem to stand still. But after a time there is a change; and he that was last may even become first, and the first last.

So too is it with God's spiritual children. Not according to outward calculations, but after the working of His grace, is their inward life manifested: often the hidden growth is unseen till the season is far advanced; and then it bursts forth in double beauty and power. a.

You desire to educate citizens; therefore govern them by law, not by will. What is individual must be reared in the quiet privacy of home. The

disregard of this distinction occasions much of the outcry of the pious against schools. Religion must not be made an engine of discipline.

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A literal translation is better than a loose one ; just as a cast from a fine statue is better than an imitation of it. For copies, whether of words or things, must be valuable in proportion to their exactness. In idioms alone, as a friend remarks to me, the literal rendering cannot be the right one.

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Hence the difficulty of translations, regarded as works of art, varies in proportion as the books translated are more or less idiomatic ; for in rendering idioms one can seldom find an equivalent, which preserves all the point and grace of the original. Hence do the best French books lose so much by being transfused into another language : a large part of the spirit evaporates in the process. To my own mind, after a good deal of experience in this line, no writer of prose has seemed so untranslatable as Goethe. In dealing with others, one may often fancy that one has expressed their meaning as fully, as clearly, and as forcibly, as they have in their own tongue. But I have hardly ever been able to satisfy myself with a single sentence rendered from Goethe. There has always seemed to be some peculiar aptness in his words, which I have been unable to represent. The same dissatisfaction, I should think, must perpetually weigh upon such as attempt to translate Plato ; whom

Goethe also resembles in this, that the unapproachable beauty of his prose does not strike us so much, until we attain to this practical conviction how inimitable it is. Richter presents difficulties to a translator, because he exercises such a boundless liberty in coining new words, whereas we are under great restraint in this respect. In attempting to render the German metaphysicians, we are continually impeded by the want of an equivalent philosophical terminology. But Goethe seldom coins words; he uses few uncommon ones: his difficulties arise from his felicity in the selection and combination of common words. U.

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Of all books the Bible loses least of its force and dignity and beauty from being translated into other languages, wherever the translation is not erroneous. One version may indeed excell another, in that its diction may be more expressive, or simpler, or more majestic: but in every version the Bible contains the sublimest thoughts uttered in plain and fitting words. It was written for the whole world, not for any single nation or age; and though its thoughts are above common thoughts, they are so as coming straight from the primal Fountain of Truth, not as having been elaborated and piled up by the workings of Abstraction and Reflexion.

One reason why the translators of the Bible have been more successful than others, is that its language, in the earlier and larger half, belongs to

that primitive period, when the native unity of human thought and feeling was only beginning to branch out into diversity and multiplicity, when the chief objects of language were the elementary features of outward nature, and of the heart and mind, and when the reflective operations of the intellect had as yet done little in bringing out those differences and distinctions, which come forward more and more as we advance further from the centre, thereby diverging further from each other, and by the aggregate of which nations as well as individuals are severed. Owing to the same cause, the language of the Bible has few of those untranslatable idiomatic expressions, which grow up and multiply with the advance of social life and thought. In the chief part of the New Testament on the other hand, a like effect is produced by the position of the writers. The language is of the simplest elementary kind, both in regard to its nomenclature and its structure, as is ever the case with that of those who have no literary culture, when they understand what they are talking about, and do not strain after matters beyond the reach of their slender powers of expression. Moreover, as the Greek original belongs to a degenerate age of the language, and is tainted with many exoticisms and other defects, while our Version exhibits our language in its highest purity and majesty, in this respect it has a great advantage.

But does not the language of Homer belong to a nearly similar period? and has any

writer been more disfigured and distorted by his translators ?

True ! The ground of the difference however is plain. The translators of Homer have allowed themselves all manner of liberties in trying to shape and fashion and dress him out anew after the pattern of their own age, and of their own individual tastes ; and against this he revolted, as the statue of Apollo or of Hercules would against being drest out in a coat and waistcoat. Whereas the translators of the Bible were induced by their reverence for the sacred text to render it with the most scrupulous fidelity. They were far more studious of the matter, than of the manner ; and there is no surer preservative against writing ill, or more potent charm for writing well. Perhaps, if other translations had been undertaken on the same principle, and carried on in a somewhat similar reverential spirit, they would not have dropt so often like a sheet of lead from the press.

At the same time we are bound to acknowledge it as an inestimable blessing, that our translation of the Bible was made, before our language underwent the various refining processes, by which it was held to be carried to its perfection in the reign of Queen Anne. For in those days the reverence for the past had faded away ; even the power of understanding it seemed well-nigh extinct. Tate and Brady's Psalms shew that the Bible would have been almost as much defaced and

corrupted as the Iliad was by Pope ; though, as a translator in verse is always constrained to assume a certain latitude, there would have been less of tinsel when the translation was in prose.

Yet the less artificial and conventional state of our language in the age of Shakspeare was far more congenial to that of the Bible. Hence, when the task of revising our translation, for the sake of correcting its numerous inaccuracies, and of removing its obscurities, so far as they can be removed, is undertaken, the utmost care should be used to preserve its language and phraseology. u.

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Philology, in its highest sense, ought to be only another name for Philosophy. Its aim should be to seek after wisdom in the whole series of its historical manifestations. As it is, the former usually mumbles the husk, the other paws the kernel. u.

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Chaos is crude matter, without the formative action of mind upon it. Hence its limits are always varying, both in every individual man, and in every nation and age. u.

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A truism misapplied is the worst of sophisms.

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One of the wonders of the world is the quantity of idle, purposeless untruth, the lies which nobody believes, yet everybody tells, as it were from the

mere love of lying,—or as though the bright form and features of Truth could not be duly brought out, except on a dark ground of falsehood.      v.

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Not a few Englishmen seem to travel abroad with hardly any other purpose than that of finding out grievances. Surely such people might just as well stay at home: they would find quite enough here. *Coelum, non animum, mutant qui trans mare currunt.*      v.

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The most venomous animals are reptiles. The most spiteful among human beings rise no higher. Reviewers should bear this in mind; for the tribe are fond of thinking that their special business is to be as galling and malicious as they can.      v.

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Some persons think to make their way through the difficulties of life, as Hannibal is said to have done across the Alps, by pouring vinegar upon them. Or they take a lesson from their housemaids, who brighten the fire-irons by rubbing them with something rough.      v.

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Would you touch a nettle without being stung by it? take hold of it stoutly. Do the same to other annoyances; and few things will ever annoy you.      v.

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One is much less sensible of cold on a bright



day, than on a cloudy. Thus the sunshine of cheerfulness and hope will lighten every trouble. u.

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Sudden resolutions, like the sudden rise of the mercury in the barometer, indicate little else than the changeableness of the weather. u.

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In a controversy both parties will commonly go too far. Would you have your adversary give up his error? be beforehand with him, and give up yours. He will resist your arguments more sturdily than your example. Indeed, if he is generous, you may fear his overrunning on the other side: for nothing provokes retaliation, more than concession does. u.

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We have all been amused by the fable of the Sun and the Wind, and readily acknowledge the truth it inculcates, at least in that instance. But do we practise what it teaches. We may almost daily. The true way of conquering our neighbour is not by violence, but by kindness. O that people would set about striving to conquer one another in this way! Then would a conqueror be truly the most glorious, and the most blessed, because the most beneficent of mankind. u.

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When you meet a countryman after dusk, he greets you, and wishes you *Goodnight*; and you return his greeting, and call him *Friend*. It seems as though a feeling of something like brotherhood

rose up in every heart, at the approach of the hour when we are all to be gathered together beneath the wings of Sleep. In this respect also is Twilight "studious to remove from sight Day's mutable distinctions," as Wordsworth says of her in his beautiful sonnet. All those distinctions Death levels; and so does Sleep.

But why should we wait for the departure of daylight, to acknowledge our brotherhood? Rather is it the dimness of our sight, the mists of our prejudices and delusions, that separate and estrange us. The light should scatter these, as spiritual light does; and it should be manifest, even outwardly, that, *if we walk in the light, we have fellowship one with another.* u.

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Flattery and detraction or evil-speaking are, as the phrase is, the Scylla and Charybdis of the tongue. Only they are set side by side: and few tongues are content with falling into one of them. Such as have once got into the jaws of either, keep on running to and fro between them. They who are too fairspeken before you, are likely to be fouspeken behind you. If you would keep clear of the one extreme, keep clear of both. The rule is a very simple one: never find fault with any body, except to himself; never praise anybody, except to others. u.

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Personalities are often regarded as the zest, but mostly are the bane of conversation. For

experience seems to have ascertained, or at least usage has determined, that personalities are always spiced with more or less of malice. Hence it must evidently be our duty to refrain from them, following the example set before us by our great moral poet :

I am not one who much or oft delight  
To season my fireside with personal talk,  
Of friends who live within an easy walk,  
Or neighbours, daily, weekly, in my sight.

But surely you would not have mixt conversation always settle into a discussion of abstract topics. Commonly speaking, you might as well feast your guests with straw-chips and saw-dust. Often too it happens that, in proportion as the subject of conversation is more abstract, its tone becomes harsher and more dogmatical. And what are women to do ? they whose thoughts always cling to what is personal, and seldom mount into the cold, vacant air of speculation, unless they have something more solid to climb round. You must admit that there would be a sad dearth of entertainment and interest and life in conversation, without something of anecdote and story.

Doubtless. But this is very different from personality. Conversation may have all that is valuable in it, and all that is lively and pleasant, without anything that comes under the head of personality. The house in which, above all others I have ever been an inmate in, the life and the spirit and the joy of conversation have been the

most intense, is a house in which I hardly ever heard an evil word uttered against any one. The genial heart of cordial sympathy with which its illustrious master sought out the good side in every person and thing, and which has found an inadequate expression in his delightful *Sketches of Persia*, seemed to communicate itself to all the members of his family, and operated as a charm even upon his visitors. For this reason was the pleasure so pure and healthy and unmixed; whereas spiteful thoughts, although they may stimulate and gratify our sicklier and more vicious tastes, always leave a bitter relish behind.

Moreover, even in conversation whatever is most vivid and brightest is the produce of the Imagination,—now and then, on fitting occasion, manifesting some of her grander powers, as Coleridge seems to have done above other men,—but usually, under a feeling of the incongruities and contradictions of human nature, putting on the comic mask of Humour. Now the Imagination is full of kindness. She could not be what she is, except through that sympathy with Nature and man, which is rooted in love. All her appetites are for good; all her aspirations are upward; all her visions,—unless there be something morbid in the feelings, or gloomy in past experience, to overcloud them,—are fair and hopeful. This is the case in poetry: the deepest tragedy ought to leave the assurance on our minds that, though *sorrow may endure for a night*, even for a long, long polar

night, *joy cometh in the morning*. Nor is her working different in real life. Looking at men's actions in conjunction with their characters, and with the circumstances whereby their characters have been modified, she can always find something to say for them; or, if she cannot, she turns away from so painful a spectacle. It is through want of Imagination, through the inability to view persons and things in their individuality and their relations, that people betake themselves to exercising their Understanding, which looks at objects in their insulation, and pries into motives, without reference to character, and rebukes and abuses what it cannot reconcile with its own narrow rules, and can see little in man but what is bad. Hence, to keep itself in spirits, it would fain be witty, and smart, and would make others smart. u.

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What is one to believe of people? One hears so many contradictory stories about them.

Exercise your digestive functions: assimilate the nutritive; get rid of the deleterious. Believe all the good you hear of your neighbour; and forget all the bad. u.

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Sense must be very good indeed, to be as good as good nonsense. u.

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Who does not think himself infallible? Who does not think himself the only infallible person in the world? Perhaps the desire to be delivered

from the tyranny of the pope within their own breasts, or at least of that within the breasts of their brethren, may have combined with the desire of being delivered from the responsibility of exercising their own judgement, in making people readier to recognise and submit to the Pope on the Seven Hills. At all events this desire has been a main impelling motive with many of the converts, who in various ages have gone back to the Church of Rome.

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U.

All sorrow ought to be *Heimweh*, homesickness. But then the home should be a real one, not a hole we run to on finding our home closed against us.

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U.

Humour is perhaps a sense of the ridiculous, softened and meliorated by a mixture of human feelings. For there certainly are things pathetically ridiculous; and we are hardhearted enough to smile smiles on them, much nearer to sorrow than many tears.

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If life were nothing more than earthly life, it might be symbolized by a Janus, with a grinning Democritus in front, and a wailing Heraclitus behind. Such antitheses have not been uncommon. One of the most striking is that between Johnson and Voltaire.

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U.

The craving for sympathy is the common boundary-line between joy and sorrow.

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U.

Many people hurry through life, fearful, as it would seem, of looking back, lest they should be turned, like Lot's wife, into pillars of salt. Alas too! if they did look back, they would see little else than the blackened and smouldering ruins of their vices, the smoking Sodom and Gomorrah of the heart. υ.

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Γνωθι σεαυτόν, they say, descended from heaven. It has taken a long journey then to very little purpose.

But surely people must know themselves. So few ever think about anything else.

Yes, they think what they shall have, what they shall get, how they shall appear, what they shall do, perchance now and then what they shall be, but never, or hardly ever, what they are. υ.

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It is a subtle and profound remark of Hegel's (Vol. x. p. 465), that the riddle which the Sphinx, the Egyptian symbol for the mysteriousness of Nature, propounds to Edipus, is only another way of expressing the command of the Delphic Oracle, γνωθι σεαυτόν. And, when the answer is given, the Sphinx casts herself down from her rock: when man does know himself, the mysteriousness of Nature, and her terrours, vanish also; and she too walks in the light of knowledge, of law, and of love. υ.

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The simplicity which pervades Nature results from the exquisite nicety with which all its parts

fit into one another. Its multiplicity of wheels and springs merely adds to its power; and, so perfect is their mutual adaptation and agreement, the effect seems inconceivable, except as the operation of a single Law, and of one supreme Author of that Law.

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v.

*The exception proves the rule*, says an old maxim, which has often been greatly abused. As it is usually brought forward, the exception in most cases merely proves the rule to be a bad one, to have been deduced negligently and hastily from inadequate premisses, and to have overreached itself. Naturally enough then it is unable to keep hold of that, on which it never laid hold. Or the exception may prove that the forms of the Understanding are not sufficiently pliant and plastic to fit the exuberant, multitudinous varieties of Nature; who does not shape her mountains by diagrams, or mark out the channels of her rivers by measure and line.

In a different sense however, the exception does not merely prove the rule, but makes the rule. The rule of human nature, the canonical idea of man is not to be taken as an average from any number of human beings: it must be drawn from the chosen, choice few, in whom that nature has come the nearest to what it ought to be. You do not form your conception of a cup from a broken one, nor that of a book from a torn or foxt and dog's-eared volume, nor that of any animal from



one that is maimed, or mutilated, or distorted, or diseased. In every species the specimen is the best that can be produced. So the conception of man is not to be taken from stunted souls, or blighted souls, or wry souls, or twisted souls, or sick souls, or withered souls, but from the healthiest and soundest, the most entire and flourishing, the straightest, the highest, the truest, and the purest.

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U,

Men ought to be manly: women ought to be womanly or feminine. They are sometimes masculine, which men cannot be; but only men can be effeminate. For masculinity and effeminacy imply the palpable predominance in the one sex, of that which is the peculiar characteristic of the other.

Not that these characteristic qualities, which in their proper place are graces, are at all incompatible. The manliest heart has often had all the gentleness and tenderness of womanhood, nay, is far likelier than the effeminate to have it. In the *Life of Lessing* we are told (i. p. 203,) that, when Kleist, the German poet, who was a brave officer, was discontented at being placed over a hospital after the battle of Rossbach, Lessing used to comfort him with the passage in Xenophon's *Cyropedia*, which says that the bravest men are always the most compassionate, adding that the eight pilgrims from Bremen and Lubeck, who went out to war against the enemy, on their first arrival

in the Holy Land took charge of the sick and wounded. On the other hand the most truly feminine heart, in time of need, will manifest all the strength and calm bravery of manhood. Among the many instances of this, let me refer to the fine stories of Chilonis, of Agesistrata, and of Archidamia, in Plutarch's *Life of Agis*. Thus too, amid the miserable spectacle just exhibited by the downfall of royalty in France, it is on the heroic fortitude of two illustrious women that the eye reposes with comfort and thankfulness, the more so because it is known that in both cases the fortitude sprang from a heavenly source. In the history of the former Revolution also the brightest spots are the noble instances of female heroism, arising mostly from the strength of the affections.

That quality however in each sex, which is in some measure alien to it, should commonly be kept in subordination to that which is the natural inmate. The softness in the man ought to be latent, as the waters lay hid within the rock in Horeb, and should only issue at some heavenly call. The courage in the woman should sleep, as the light sleeps in the pearl.

The perception of fitness is ever a main element in the perception of pleasure. What agrees with the order of Nature is agreeable; what disagrees with that order is disagreeable. Hence our hearts, in spite of their waywardness, and of all the tricks we play with them, still on the whole keep true

to their original bent. Women admire and love in men whatever is most manly. Thus Steffens, in one of his Novels (*Malcolm* ii. p. 12), makes Matilda say: "We women should be in a sad case, if we could not reckon with confidence on the firmness and stedfastness of men. However peacefully our life may revolve around the quiet centre of our own family, we cannot but be aware that in the wider relations of life many things are tottering and insecure, and can only be upheld by clearness of insight, by vigorous activity, and by manly strength; without which it would fall and injure our own quiet field of action. . The place which in earlier times the rude or the chivalrous bravery of men held in the estimation of women, is now held by firmness of character, by cheerful confidence in action, which does not shrink from obstacles, but stands fast when others are troubled. The manyheaded monsters which were to be conquered of yore, have not disappeared in consequence of their bearing other weapons; and true manly boldness wins our hearts now, as it did formerly." Hence it was only in a morbid, corrupt state of society, that a Wertherian sentimentalism could be deemed a charm for the female heart. Notwithstanding too all that has been done to pamper the admiration of talents into a blind idolatry, no sensible woman would not immeasurably prefer steadiness and manliness of character to the utmost brilliancy of intellectual gifts. Indeed she who gave up herself to the latter, without the former,

would soon feel an aching want. Othello's wooing of Desdemona is still the way to the true female heart.

On the other hand that which men love and admire in women, is whatever is womanly and feminine, that of which we see such beautiful pictures in Imogen and Cordelia and Miranda, in

The gentle lady married to the Moor,  
And heavenly Una with her milkwhite lamb.

Among a number of proofs of this I will only mention the repugnance which all men feel at the display of a pair of blue stockings.

One of the few hopeful symptoms in our recent literature is, that this year (1848) has been opened by two such beautiful poems as *the Saint's Tragedy* and *the Princess*; in both of which the leading purpose, though very differently treated, is to exhibit the true idea and dignity of womanhood. In the latter poem this idea is vindicated from the perversions of modern rhetorical and sensual sophistry; in the former, from those of the rhetorical and ascetical sophistry of the middle ages, not however with the idle purpose of assailing an exploded error, but because this very form of error has lately been reviving, through a sort of antagonism to the other. In a year when so many frantic delusions have been spreading with convulsive power, casting down thrones, dissolving empires, uprooting the whole fabric of society, it is a comfort to find such noble

assertions of the true everlasting ideas of humanity. \_\_\_\_\_ v.

What should women write ?

That which they can write, and not that which they cannot. This is clear. They should only write that which they can write well, that which accords with the peculiar character of their minds. For thus much I must be allowed to assume,—it would take too long here to argue the point,—that, as in their outward conformation, and in the offices assigned to them by Nature, and as in the bent and tone of their feelings, so in the structure of their minds there is a sexual distinction. Some persons deny this; those, for instance, who are delighted at hearing that the minds of all mankind, and of all womankind too, are sheets of white paper, and who think the easiest way of building a house is on the sand, where they shall have no obstacles to level and remove in digging for the foundations; those again who are incapable of mounting to the conception of an originating power, and who cannot move a step, unless they can support themselves by taking hold of the chain of cause and effect; those who, themselves being the creatures of circumstances, or at least being unconscious of any power in themselves to withstand and controul and modify circumstances, are naturally prone to believe that every one else must be a similar hodge-podge. But as the whole history of the world is adverse

to such a notion, as under every aspect of society it exhibits a difference between the sexes, varying indeed, to a certain extent, according to their relative positions, but marked throughout by a pervading analogy, which is reflected from the face of actual life by an unbroken series of images in poetry from the age of Homer down to Tieck and Tennyson, there is no need of combating an assertion, deduced from an arbitrary hypothesis, by the very persons who are loudest in proclaiming that there is no ground of real knowledge except facts.

Now to begin with poetry,—according to the precedence which has always belonged to it in the literature of every people,—some may incline to fancy that, while prose, from its connexion with speculation, and with action in the whole sphere of public life, belongs especially to men, poetry is rather the feminine department of literature. Yet, being asked many years ago why a tragedy by a lady highly admired for her various talents had not succeeded, I replied,—though, I trust, never wanting in due respect to that sex which is hallowed by comprising the sacred names of wife and sister and mother,—that there was no need to seek for any further reason, beyond its being written by a woman. For of all modes of composition none can be less feminine than the dramatic. They who are to represent the great dramas of life, the strife and struggle of passions in the world, should have a consciousness of the

powers, which would enable them to act a part in those dramas, latent within them, and should have some actual experience of the conflicts of those passions. They also need that judicial calmness in giving every one his due, which we see in Nature and in History, but which is utterly repugnant to the strong affectionateness of womanhood. A woman may indeed write didactic dialogues on the passions, as Johanna Baillie has done with much skill ; but these are not tragedies. Nor is epic poetry less alien from the genius of the female mind. So that, of the three main branches of poetry, the only feminine one is the lyrical,—not objective lyrical poetry, like that of Pindar and Simonides, and the choric odes of the Greek tragedians,—but that which is the expression of individual, personal feeling, like Sappho's. Of this class we have noble examples in the songs of Miriam, of Deborah, of Hannah, and of the Blessed Virgin.

The same principle will apply to prose. What women write best is what expresses personal, individual feeling, or describes personal occurrences, not objectively, as parts of history, but with reference to themselves and their own affections. This is the charm of female letters: they alone touch the matters of ordinary life with ease and grace. Men's letters may be witty, or eloquent, or profound ; but, when they have anything beyond a merely practical purpose, they mostly pass out of the true epistolary element, and become didactic

or satirical. Cowper alone, whose mind had much of a feminine complexion, can vie with women in writing such letters as flow calmly and brightly along, mirroring the scenes and occupations of common life. In Bettina Brentano's there is an impassioned lyrical eloquence, which is often worthy of Sappho, with an exquisite naivety peculiarly her own. Rahel's, with a piercing intuitive discernment of reality and truth, which is peculiarly a female gift, have an almost painful subtilty in the analysis of feelings, which was forced into a morbid intensity, partly by her position as a Jewess, in the midst of a community where Jews were regarded with hatred and contempt, and partly by the acutest nervous sensitiveness, the cause of excruciating sufferings prolonged through years.

Memoirs again, when they do not meddle with the intrigues of politics and literature, but confine themselves to a simple affectionate narrative of what has befallen the authoress and those most dear to her, are womanly works. Of these we have a beautiful example in those of the admirable Lucy Hutchinson; and there is a pleasing grace in Lady Fanshawe's. Madame Larochejacquelein's also are delightful; but these, I have understood, were made up out of her materials by Barante.

Moreover, as women can express earthly love, so can they express heavenly love, with an entire consecration of every thought and feeling, such



as men, under the necessity which presses on them of being *troubled about many things*, can hardly attain to ; as we see for instance in the writings of Santa Teresa, of St Catherine of Sienna, of Madame Guyon.

Books on the practical education of children too, and story-books for them, such as Miss Lamb's delightful *Stories of Mrs Leicester's School*, lie within the range of female authorship.

But what say you to female novels ?

Were I Tarquin, and the Sibyl came to me with nine wagonloads of them, I am afraid I should allow her to burn all the nine, even though she were to threaten that no others should ever be forthcoming hereafter. One may indeed meet now and then with happy representations of female characters and of domestic manners, as in Miss Austen's novels, and in Frederika Bremer's. But the class is by no means a healthy one. Novels which are works of poetry,—novels which transport us out of ourselves into an ideal world, another, yet still the same,—novels which represent the fermenting and contending elements of human life and society,—novels which, seizing the follies of the age, dig down to their roots,—novels which portray the waywardnesses and self-delusions of passion,—may hold a high rank in literature. But ordinary novels, which string a number of incidents, and a few common-place pasteboard characters, around a love-story, teaching people to fancy that the main business of

life is to make love and to be made love to, and that, when it is made, all is over, are almost purely mischievous. When we build castles, they should be in the air. When we indulge in romantic dreams, they should lie in the realms of romance. It is most hurtful to be wishing to act a novel in real life, most hurtful to fancy that the interest of life resides in its pleasures and passions, not in its duties; and it mars all simplicity of character to have the feelings and events of common life spread out under a sort of fantasmagoric illumination before us.                    u.

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*Written in the Album of a lady, who, on my saying one evening, I was not well enough to read, replied, "Therefore you will be able to write something for me."*

*You cannot read . . . therefore, I pray you, write :*  
 The lady said. Thus female logic prances :  
 From twig to twig, from bank to bank it dances,  
 Heedless what unbridged gulfs may disunite  
 The object from the wish. In wanton might,  
 Spring-like, you tell the rugged skeleton,  
 That bares its wiry branches to the sun,  
*Thou hast no leaves . . . therefore with flowers grow bright.*  
*Therefore !* Fair maiden's lips such word ill suits.  
 From her it only means, *I will, I wish.*  
 She scorns her pet,—unless he put on boots,  
 Straight plunges through the water at the fish,  
 Nor lets *I dare not* wait upon *I would :*  
 For what 's impossible must sure be good.

*Therefore!* With soft, bright lips such words ill suit.  
 Man's hard, clencht mouth, whence words unceath do slip,  
 May wear out stones with its slow ceaseless drip.  
 But ye who play on Fancy's hope-strung lute,  
 Shun the dry chaff that chokes and strikes her mute.  
 Yet grieve not that ye may not cleave the ground,  
 And hunt the roots out as they stray around :  
 'Tis yours to cull the blossoms and the fruit.  
*Therefore* could never yet link earth to heaven :  
*Therefore* ne'er yet brought heaven down on earth.  
 Where *therefore* dies, Faith has its deathless birth :  
 To Hope a sphere beyond its sphere is given :  
 And Love bids *therefore* stand aside in awe,  
 Is its own reason, its own holy law. U.

1834.

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Female education is often a gaudy and tawdry  
 setting, which cumbers and almost hides the jewel  
 it ought to bring out. A.

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Politeness is the outward garment of goodwill.  
 But many are the nutshells, in which, if you  
 crack them, nothing like a kernel is to be found. A.

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With what different eyes do we view an action,  
 when it is our own, and when it is another's! A.

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We seldom do a kindness, which, if we consider  
 it rightly, is not abundantly repaid; and we should  
 hear little of ingratitude, unless we were so apt  
 to exaggerate the worth of our better deeds, and  
 to look for a return in proportion to our own  
 exorbitant estimate. A.

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A girl, when entering on her teens, was observed to be very serious; and, on her aunt's asking her whether anything was the matter, she said, she was afraid that reason was coming.

One might wish to know whether she ever felt equally serious, after it had come. If so, she differed from most of her own sex, and from a large part of the other. But the shadows in the morning and evening are longer than at noon.

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Eloquence is speaking out...out of the abundance of the heart,—the only source from which truth can flow in a passionate, persuasive torrent. Nothing can be juster than Quintilian's remark (x. 7, 15), "*Pectus est, quod disertos facit, et vis mentis: ideoque imperitis quoque, si modo sint aliquo affectu concitati, verba non desunt.*" This is the explanation of that singular psychological phenomenon, Irish eloquence; I do not mean that of the orators merely, but that of the whole people, men, women, and children.

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It is not solely in the Gospel that people go out into the desert to gape after new spiritual incarnations. They have sometimes been sought in moral deserts, often in intellectual.

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The book which men throw at one another's head the oftenest, is the Bible; as though they misread the text about the Kingdom of Heaven,

and fancied it took people, instead of being taken, by force.

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Were we to strip our sufferings of all the aggravations which our over-busy imaginations heap upon them, of all that our impatience and wilfulness embitters in them, of all that a morbid craving for sympathy induces us to display to others, they would shrink to less than half their bulk; and what remained would be comparatively easy to support. a.

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In addition to the sacrifices prescribed by the Law, every Israelite was permitted to make free-will-offerings, the only limitation to which was, that they were to be according as the Lord had blest him. What then ought to be the measure of our freewill-offerings? ought they not to be infinite? e.

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Many persons are so afraid of breaking the third commandment, that they never speak of God at all; and, to make assurance doubly sure, never think of Him.

Others seem to interpret it by the law of contraries; for they never take God's name except in vain. So apt too are people to indulge in self-delusions, that many of these have rankt themselves among the stanch friends and champions of the Church. u.

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On ne se gêne pas dans cette vie: on ne se presse pas pour l'autre. u.

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A sudden elevation in life, like mounting into a rarer atmosphere, swells us out, and often perniciously. u.

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What would become of a man in a vacuum? All his members would bulge out until they burst. This is the true image of anarchy, whether political or moral, intellectual or spiritual. We need the pressure of an atmosphere around us, to keep us whole and at one. u.

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Pantheism answers to ochlocracy, and leads to it; pure monotheism, to a despotic monarchy. If a type of trinitarianism is to be found in the political world, it must be a government by three estates, *tria juncta in uno*. u.

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A strong repugnance is felt now-a-days to all *a priori* reasoning; and to call a system an *a priori* system is deemed enough to condemn it. Let the materialist then fall by his own doom. For he is the most presumptuous *a priori* reasoner, who peremptorily lays down beforehand, that the solution of every intellectual and moral phenomenon is to be sought and found in what comes immediately under the cognisance of the senses. u.

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What is *sansculotterie*, or the folly of the *descamisados*, but man's stripping himself of the fig-leaf? He has forgotten that there is a God, from whom he needs to hide himself; and he prostitutes his nakedness in the eyes of the world. Thus it is a step in the process, which is ever going on, where it is not counteracted by conscience and faith, of bestializing humanity. v.

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It is a favorite axiom with our political economists,—an axiom which has been far more grossly abused by the exaggerations and misapplications of its advocates, than it ever can be by the invectives of its opponents,—that the want produces the supply. In other words, poverty produces wealth; a vacuum produces a plenum.

Now *Πενία*, it is true, in the Platonic Fable, is the mother of "Ερως. But she is not the mother of Πόρος. On the contrary it is, when impregnated by Πόρος, that she brings forth "Ερως, who then, according to the chorus of the Birds, may become the parent of all things. This Greek fable, which is no less superior to the modern system in profound wisdom than in beauty, will enable us to discern the real value of the above-mentioned axiom, and the limits within which it is applicable, and at the same time to expose the fallacy involved in its extension beyond those limits.

*Want* is an ambiguous term. It means mere

destitution ; and it means desire : it may be equivalent to *Πενία*, or to *Ἔρως*. These two senses are often confounded ; or a logical trickster will slip in one instead of the other. Mere destitution cannot produce a supply : of itself it cannot even produce a desire. There is no necessity by which our being without a thing constrains us to wish for it. We are without wings ; but this does not make us want to have them ; nor would such a want cause a pair to shoot out of our shoulders. The wishing-cap of Fortunatus belongs to the cloud-land of poetical, or to the smoke-land of philosophical dreamers.

The wants which tend to produce a supply, are of two kinds, instinctive and artificial. The former seek after that, a desire of which has been implanted in us by Nature ; the latter after that, which we have been taught to desire by experience. Thus, in order that *Ἔρως* should spring from *Πενία*, it is necessary that she should have been overshadowed by *Πόρος*, either consciously or unconsciously. The light must enter into the darkness, ere the darkness can know that it is without light, and open its heart to desire and embrace it.

Even with reference to Commerce, from which our axiom has been derived, we may see that, though the want, when created, tends to produce a supply, there must have been a supply in the first instance to produce the want. Thus in England at present few articles of consumption



are deemed more indispensable than potatoes and tea ; and vast exertions are employed in supplying the want of them. But everybody knows that these wants are entirely artificial, and that they were produced gradually, and very slowly, by the introduction of these articles, which now rank among the prime necessaries of our economical life.

If we take the principle we are speaking of in this, its right sense, it has indeed been very widely operative, in the moral and intellectual, as well as in the physical history of man. In fact it is only the witness borne by the whole order of Nature to the truth of the divine law, that they who seek shall find. Our constitution, and that of the world around us, have been so exquisitely adapted to each other, that not only did they harmonize at the first, but all the changes and varieties in the one have called forth corresponding changes and varieties in the other. It is interesting to trace the adjustments by which accidental deficiencies are remedied, to observe how our bodily frame fits itself to circumstances, and seems almost to put forth new faculties, when there is need of them. The blind learn, as it were, to see with their ears ; the deaf, to hear with their eyes. Let both these senses be taken away : the touch comes forward and assumes their office. In like manner the physical characters of men in different stages of society are modified and moulded by the wants

which act on them. Savages, for example, have a strength and sharpness of perception, which in civilized life, being no longer needed, wears away.

Thus, if a want is of such a kind as to give rise to a demand, it will produce a supply, or some sort of substitute for it. In other words, the nature and extent of the supply will depend in great measure on the nature and extent of the demand. But when the same axiom is applied, as it often has been, to prove the uselessness of those great national institutions, which are designed to elevate and to hallow our nature,—when it is contended, for instance, that our Universities are useless, because the want of knowledge will produce the best supply, without the aid of any endowments or privileges conferred or sanctioned by the State,—or that the want of religion will produce an adequate supply, without a National Establishment,—the ground is shifted; and the argument, if pushed to an extreme, would amount to this, that *omnia fiunt ex nihilo*.

Here is a double paralogism. It is true indeed, as I have admitted above, that, if a want be felt, so as to excite a desire and a demand, it will produce a supply of some sort or other. This however is itself the main difficulty with regard to our intellectual and moral, above all, our spiritual wants, to awaken a consciousness and feeling of them, and a desire to remove them. Where a certain degree of supply exists, such as

that of knowledge in the educated classes of society, custom and shame and self-respect will excite a general demand for a somewhat similar amount of knowledge. But, if it is to go beyond those limits in any department, it can only be through the influence of persons who have attained to a higher eminence; so that here too the supply will precede the demand. On the other hand they who have had any concern with the education of the lower classes, will be aware of the enormous power which the *vis inertiae* possesses in them, and what strong stimulants are required to counteract it. As to our spiritual wants, though they exist in all, they are so feeble in themselves, and so trodden under foot and crushed by our carnal appetites and worldly practices, you might as well expect that a field of corn, over which a regiment of cavalry has been galloping to and fro, will rise up to meet the sun, as that of ourselves we shall seek food for our spiritual wants. Even when the Bread of Life came down from heaven, we turned away from it, and rejected it. Even when *He came to His own, His own received Him not.*

Moreover, if we suppose a people to have become in some measure conscious of its intellectual and its spiritual wants, so that an intellectual and spiritual demand shall exist among them, they in whom it exists will be very ill fitted to judge of the quality of the supply which they want. They may distinguish between good tea

and bad, between good wine and bad, though even that requires some culture of the perceptive faculty. But with regard to knowledge, especially that of spiritual truth, they will be at the mercy of every impudent quack, unless some determinate provision is made by the more intelligent part of the nation, whereby the people shall be supplied with duly qualified guides and instructors.

That such institutions, like everything else here on earth, are liable to corruption and perversion, I do not deny. Even solar time is not true time. But correctives may be devised; and in all such institutions there should be a power of modifying and adapting themselves to new wants that may spring up. This however would lead me too far. I merely wish to point out the gross fallacy in the argument by which such institutions are impugned.

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U.

The main part of the foregoing remarks was written many years ago, on being told by a friend, that he had heard the argument here refuted urged as quite conclusive against our Universities and our Church-establishment, by certain Scotch philosophers of repute. The fallacy seemed to me so glaring, that I could hardly understand how any persons, with the slightest habit of close thinking, could fail to detect it. Hence I was a good deal surprised at reading in a newspaper several years after, that Dr Chalmers, in the Lectures which he delivered in

London in 1838, had complained at great length and with bitterness, of some one who had purloined this reply to the economical argument from him, and who had deprived him of the fame of being the discoverer. As these Lectures are printed in the collection of his Works, this complaint must have been greatly mitigated, and is degraded into a note. Honour to the great and good man, who, having been bred and trained in an atmosphere charged with similar sophisms, was the first, as it would seem, to detect this mischievous one, or at least to expose it! But surely, of all things, the last in which we should lay claim to a monopoly or a patent, is truth. Even in regard to more recondite matters, it has often been seen that great discoveries have, so to say, been trembling on the tongue of several persons at once; and he who has had the privilege of enunciating them, has merely been the Flugelman in the army of Knowledge. If others utter a truth, which we fancy we have discovered, at the same time with ourselves, or soon after, and independently, we should not grudge them their share in the honour, but rather give thanks for such a token that the discovery is timely, that the world was ready for it, and wanted it, and that its spies were gone out to seek it. U.

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*Amo*, or some word answering to it, is given in the grammars of most languages as an example of the verb; perhaps because it expresses the

most universal feeling, the feeling which is mixt up with and forms the key-note of all others. The disciples of the selfish school indeed acknowledge it only in its reflex form. If one of them wrote a grammar, his instance would be :

Je m'aime.	Nous nous aimons.
Tu t'aimes.	Vous vous aimez.
Il s'aime.	Ils s'aiment.

Yet the poor simple Greeks did not know that  $\phi\lambda\epsilon\iota\nu$  would admit of a middle voice. u.

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The common phrase, *to be in love*, well expresses the immersion of the soul in love, like that of the body in light. Thus South says, in his Sermon *On the Creation* (vol. i. p. 44): "Love is such an affection, as cannot so properly be said to be in the soul, as the soul to be in that." u.

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Man cannot emancipate himself from the notion that the earth and everything on it, and even the sun, moon, and stars, were made almost wholly and solely for his sake. Yet, if the Earth and her creatures are made to supply him with food, he on his part is made to till the Earth, and to prepare and train her and all her creatures for the fulfilment of their appointed works. If he would win her favours, he must woo her by faithful and diligent service. There should be a perpetual reciprocation of kind offices. As the Earth shared in his Fall, so is she to share in his redemption, waiting, with all her

creatures, in earnest expectation for the manifestation of the sons of God. At present, if he often treats her insultingly and domineeringly, the Earth in revenge has the last word, and silences and swallows him up. U.

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Two streams circulate through the universe, the stream of Life, and the stream of Death. Each feeds, and feeds upon the other. For they are perpetually crossing, like the serpents round Mercury's Caduceus, wherewith *animas ille evocat Orco Pallentes, alias sub Tartara tristia mittit*. They began almost together; and they will terminate together, in the same unfathomable ocean; after which they will separate, and take contrary directions, and never meet again. U.

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If roses have withered, buds have blown :  
 If rain has fallen, winds have dried :  
 If fields have been ravaged, seeds are sown :  
 And Wordsworth lives, if poets have died.

For all things are equal here upon earth :  
 'Tis the ashes of Joy that give Sorrow her birth :  
 And Sorrow's dark cloud, after louring awhile,  
 Or melts, or is brightened by Hope to a smile.

Where the death-bell tolled, the merry chime rings :  
 Where waved the cypress, myrtles spread :  
 When Passion is drooping, Friendship springs,  
 And feeds the Love which Fancy bred.

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The consummation of Heathen virtue was expressed in the wish of the Roman, that his house

were of glass: so might all men behold every action of his life. The perfection of Christian goodness is defined by the simple command, which however is the most arduous ever laid upon man, not to let the left hand know what the right hand does. For the eye which overlooks the Christian, is the eye which sees in secret, and which cannot be deceived, the eye which does not need glass as a medium of sight, and which pierces into what no glass can reveal. u.

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Hardly any dram is so noxious as praise; perhaps none: for those whom praise corrupts, might else have wrought good in their generation. Like Tarquin, it cuts off the tallest plants. Be sparing of it therefore, ye parents, as ye would be of some deadly drug: withhold your children from it, as ye would from the flowers on the brink of a precipice. Whatsoever you enjoin, enjoin it as a duty; enjoin it because it is right; enjoin it because it is the will of God; and always without reference to what man may say or think of it. Reference to the opinion of the world, and deference to the opinion of the world, and conference with it, and inference from it, and preference of it above all things, above every principle and rule and law, human or divine,—all this will come soon enough without your interference. As easily might you stop the east wind, or check the blight it bears along with it. Ask your own conscience, reader; probe your heart; walk



through its labyrinthine chambers; and trace the evils you feel within you to their source: do you not owe the first seeds of many of your moral diseases, and the taint which cankers your better feelings, to your having drunk too deeply of this delicious poison?

At first indeed it may seem harmless. The desire of praise seems to be little else than the desire of approbation: and by what lodestar is a child to be guided, unless by the approving judgement of its parent? But, although their languages on the confines are so similar as scarcely to be distinguishable, you have only to advance a few steps, and you will find that you are in a foreign country, happy if you discover it to be an enemy's, before you become a captive. Approbation speaks of the thing or action: *That is right. What you have done is right.* Praise is always personal. It begins indeed gently with the particular instance, *You have done right*; but it soon fixes on lasting attributes, and passes from *You are right*, through *You are a good child, You are a nice child, You are a sweet child*, to that which is the cruelest of all, *You are a clever child*. For God in His mercy has hitherto preserved goodness from being much fly-blown and desecrated by admiration. People who wish to be stared at, seldom try hard to be esteemed good. Vanity takes a shorter and more congenial path: and the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge is still, in a secondary way, one of the baits which catch

the greatest number of souls. When a child has once eaten of that fruit, and been told that it is worthy to eat thereof, it longs for a second bite; not however so much from any strong relish for the fruit itself, as from the hope of renewing the pleasing titillations by which the first mouthful had been followed. This longing in time becomes a craving, the craving a gnawing ravenousness: nothing is palatable, save what pampers it; but there is nothing out of which it cannot extract some kind of nourishment.

Yet, alas! it is on this appetite that we rely, on this almost alone, for success, in our modern systems of Education. We excite, stimulate, irritate, drug, dram the pupil, and then leave him to do what he pleases, heedless how soon he may break down, so he does but start at a gallop. Nothing can induce a human being to exert himself, except vanity or jealousy: such is our primary axiom; and our deductions are worthy of it. Emulation, Emulation, is the order of the day, Emulation in its own name, or under an *alias* as Competition: and only look at the wonders it has effected: it has even turned the hue of the Ethiop's skin: it has set all the blacking-mongers in England emulating and competing with each other in whitewashing every wall throughout the country. Emulation is declared to be the only principle we can trust with safety: for principle it is called; although it implies the rejection and denial of all principle,

of its efficacy at least, if not of its existence, and is a base compromise between principle and opinion, in which the things of eternity are made to bow down before the wayward notions and passions of the day. Nay, worse, this principle, or no-principle, is adopted as the main spring and motive in a scheme of National, and even of Religious Education, by the professing disciples of the Master who declared, that, if any man desires to be first, he shall be last, and whose Apostle has numbered Emulation among *the works of the flesh*, together with adultery, idolatry, hatred, strife, and murder. We may clamour as we will about the unchristian practices of the Jesuits: the Jesuits knew too much of Christianity, ever to commit such an outrage against its spirit, as to make children pass through the furnace of the new Moloch, Emulation.\*

But let me turn from these noisy vulgar paradoxes, to look at Wisdom in her quiet gentleness, as in Wordsworth's sweet language she describes the growth of her favorite,

A maid whom there were none to praise,  
And very few to love.

The air of these simple words, after the hot, close atmosphere I have been breathing, is as soft and

\* This was written in 1826. Since then the worship of Emulation has been assailed in many quarters; and the system of our National Schools has been improved. Still the idol has not yet been cast down; and what was true in matter of principle then, is just as true now.

refreshing as the touch of a rose-leaf to a feverish cheek. The truth however, so exquisitely express in them, was equally present to persons far wiser than our system-makers, the authors of our popular tales. The beautiful story of Cinderella, among others, shews an insight into the elements of all that is lovely in character, seldom to be paralleled in these days.

Ought not parents and children then to be fond of each other ?

You, who can interrupt me with such a question, must have a very fond notion of fondness: Whatever is peculiar in fondness, whatever distinguishes it from love, is faulty. Fondness may dote and be foolish: Love is only another name for Wisdom. It is the Wisdom of the Affections, as Wisdom is the Love of the Understanding. Fondness may flatter and be flattered: Love shrinks from flattery, from giving or receiving it. Love knows that there are things which are not to be seen, that there are things which are not to be talkt of; and it shrinks equally from the thought of polluting what is invisible by its gaze, and of profaning what is unutterable by its prattle. Its origin is a mystery: its essence is a mystery: every pulsation of its being is mysterious: and it is aware that it cannot break the shell, and penetrate the mystery, without destroying both itself and its object.\* For the cloud, which is

\* Since the above was written, I have met with the same thoughts in a pamphlet written by Passow, the excellent

so beautiful in the distance, when the sunbeams are sleeping on its pillow, if you go too near and enter it, is only dank and dun: you find nothing, you learn nothing, except that you have been trickt. Often have we been told that Love palls after fruition; and this is the reason. When it has pluckt off its feathers for the sake of staring at them, it can never sew them on again: when it is swinish, it is in a double sense guilty of suicide. Its dwelling is like that of the Indian God on the lotus, upon the bosom of Beauty, rising out from the playful waters of feelings

lexicographer, during the controversy excited by the attempt to introduce gymnastic exercises as an instrument of education. "If our love for our country is to be sincere, without ostentation and affectation, it cannot be produced immediately by instruction and directions, like a branch of scientific knowledge. It must rest, like every other kind of love, on something unutterable and incomprehensible. Love may be fostered: it may be influenced by a gentle guidance from afar: but, if the youthful mind becomes conscious of this, all the simplicity of the feeling is destroyed; its native gloss is brusht off. Such too is the case with the love of our country. Like the love for our parents, it exists in a child from the beginning; but it has no permanency, and cannot expand, if the child is kept, like a stranger, at a distance from his country. No stories about it, no exhortations will avail, as a substitute: we must see our country, feel it, breathe it in, as we do Nature. Then history may be of use, and after a time reflexion, consciousness. But our first care ought to be for institutions, in which the spirit of our country lives, without being uttered in words, and takes possession of men's minds involuntarily. For a love derived from precepts is none:" *Turnszel*, p. 142.

which cannot be fixt: and it cannot turn up the lotus to look under it, without oversetting and drowning itself; it cannot tear up its root, to plant it on the firm ground of scientific conviction, but it withers and dies. Such as love wisely therefore, cherish the mystery, and handle the blossom delicately and charily; for so only will it retain its amaranthine beauty.

There is no greater necessity for a father's or mother's love to vent itself in bepraising their child, than for the child's love to vent itself in bepraising its father and mother. The latter is too pure and reverential to do so: why should the former be less reverential? Or can any object be fitter to excite reverence, than the spirit of a child, newly sent forth from God, in all the loveliness of innocence, with all the fascination of helplessness, and with the secret destinies of its future being hanging like clouds around its unconscious form? On the contrary, as, the less water you have in your kettle, the sooner it begins to make a noise and smoke, so is it with affection: the less there is, the more speedily it sounds, and smokes, and evaporates, talking itself at once out of breath and into it. Nay, when parents are much in the habit of showering praises on their children, it is in great measure for the sake of the pleasing vapour which rises upon themselves. For the whirlpool of Vanity sucks in whatever comes near it. The vain are vain of everything that belongs to them, of their

houses, their clothes, their eye-glasses, the white of their nails, and, alas ! even of their children.

Equally groundless would be the notion that children need to be thus made much of, in order to love their parents. Such treatment rather weakens and shakes affection. For there is an instinct of modesty in the human soul, that instinct which manifests itself so beautifully by enabling us to blush ; and, until this instinct has been made callous by the rub of life, it cannot help looking distrustfully on praise. Thus Steffens, in his *Malcolm* (i. p. 379), represents a handsome, manly boy, whom a number of ladies treated with vociferous admiration, caressing and kissing him, and calling him *a lovely child, quite an angel*. "But he was very much annoyed at this, and at length tore himself away impatiently, prest close to his mother, and complained aloud and vexatiously : *Why do they kiss and caress me so ? I can't bear it.*" A beautiful contrast to this is supplied by Herder's recollections of his father, as related by his widow (*Erinnerungen aus Herders Leben*, i. p. 17.). "When he was satisfied with me, his face grew bright, and he laid his hand softly on my head, and called me *Gottesfriede* (*God's peace* : his name was *Gottfried*). This was my greatest, sweetest reward." This exemplifies the distinction drawn above between praise and approbation.

The very pleasure occasioned by praise is of a kind which implies it to be something unexpected

and forbidden, and not more than half deserved. Besides, as I have already said, the habit of feeding on it breeds such an insatiable hunger, that even a parent may in time grow to be valued chiefly as ministering to the gratification of this appetite. Hence would spring a state like that described by Robert Hall in his sermon on *Modern Infidelity* (p. 38): "Conceive of a domestic circle, in which each member is elated by a most extravagant opinion of himself, and a proportionable contempt of every other,—is full of little contrivances to catch applause, and, whenever he is not praised, is sullen and disappointed."

Affection, to be pure and durable, must be altogether objective. It may indeed be nursed by the memory of benefits received; but it has nothing to do with hope, except the hope of intercourse and communion, of interchanging kind looks and words, and of performing kind deeds. Whatever is beside this, is not love, but lust, it matters not of what appetite, nor whether of the body or of the mind. u.

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What a type of a happy family is the family of the Sun! With what order, with what harmony, with what blessed peace, do his children the planets move around him, shining with the light which they drink in from their parent's face, at once on him and on one another! u.

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How great is the interval between gamboling and gambling. One belongs to children, the other to grown up people. If an angel were looking on, might he not say? *Is this what man learns from life? Was it for this that the father of a new generation was preserved from the waters of the Flood?*

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U.

O that old age were truly second childhood! It is seldom more like it than the berry is to the rosebud.

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Few things more vividly teach us the difference between the living objects of Nature and the works of man's contrivance, than the impressions produced, when, after a lapse of years, we for the first time revisit the home of our childhood. On entering the old house, how strangely changed does everything appear! We look in vain for much that our fancy, unchecked by the knowledge of any other world than that immediately around, had pictured to itself; and we turn away in half incredulous disappointment, as we pass from room to room, and our memory calls up the various events connected with them. It almost seems to us as though, while our minds have been expanding at a distance, the familiar chambers and halls must have been growing narrower, and are threatening, like the prison-tomb in Eastern story, to close upon all the joys of our childhood, and to crush them for ever.

But, when we quit the house of man's building, and seek for fellowship with the past among the living, boundless realities of Nature, all that we had lost is regained; and we find how faithful a guardian angel she has been, and how richly she restores us a hundredfold the treasures we had committed to her keeping. The waters of the peaceful river, winding through the groves where the child delighted to wander, speak to us in the same voice now, in which they spoke then; and, while we listen to them, the confiding lilies upborne no less lovingly on their bosom, than when in early days we vainly tried to tear them from it, are an emblem of the happy thoughts which we had cast upon them, and which they have preserved for us until we come to reclaim them. The bright kingfisher darting into the river recalls our earliest visions of beauty; and the chorus of birds in the groves seem not only to welcome us back, but also to reawaken the pure melodies of childhood in its holiest aspirations. In like manner, as we walk under the deep shade of the stately avenues, the whisperings among the branches seem to flow from the spirits of the place, giving back their portion of the record of our childish years; and we are reminded of the awe with which that shade imprest us, and of the first time we felt anything like fear, when, on a dark evening, the sudden cry of the screech-owl taught us that those trees had other inhabitants, beside

the birds to which we listened with such delight by day.

Thus the whole of Nature appears to us full of living echoes, to which we uttered our hopes and joys in childhood, though the sound of her response only now for the first time reaches our ears. Everywhere we, as it were, receive back the tokens of a former love, which we had too long forgotten, but which has continued faithful to us. Hence we shall return to our work in the world with a wiser and truer heart, having learnt that this life is indeed the seed-time for eternity, and that in all our acts, from the simplest to the highest, we are sowing what, though it may appear for a time to die, only dies to be quickened and to bear fruit. ε.

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May we not conceive too, that, if a spirit, after having past through the manifold pleasures and cares and anxieties and passions and feverish struggles of this mortal life, and been removed from them by death, were to revisit this home of its antemortal existence, it would in like manner shrink in amazed and sickening disappointment from the narrow, petty, mean, miserable objects of all its earthly aims and contentions, and would at the same time be filled with wonder and adoration, as it contemplated the infinite wisdom and love, manifested both in the whole structure and order of the Divine Purposes, and in their perfect

correspondence to its own imperfectly understood  
wants and desires ? \_\_\_\_\_ U.

As well might you search out a vessel's path  
Amid the gambols of the dancing waves,  
Or track the lazy footsteps of a star  
Across the blue abyss, as hope to trace  
The motions of her spirit. Easier task  
To clench the bodiless ray, than to arrest  
Her airy thoughts. Flower after flower she sips,  
And sucks their honied fragrance, nor bedims  
Their brightness, nor appears to spoil their stores;  
And all she lights on seems to grow more fair.

Fuller, in his *Good Thoughts in Worse Times*, has a passage on Ejaculations, in which he introduces the foregoing image so prettily, that I will quote it. "The field wherein bees feed is no whit the barer for their biting. When they have taken their full repast on flowers or grass, the ox may feed, the sheep fat, on their reversions. The reason is, because those little chemists distill only the refined part of the flower, leaving the grosser substance thereof. So ejaculations bind not men to any bodily observance, only busy the spiritual half, which maketh them consistent with the prosecution of any other employment."

\_\_\_\_\_ U.

When we are gazing on a sweet, guileless child, playing in the exuberance of its happiness, in the light of its own starry eyes, we are tempted to deny that anything so lovely can have a corrupt

nature latent within ; and we would gladly disbelieve that the germs of evil are lying in these beautiful blossoms. Yet, in the tender green of the sprouting nightshade, we can already recognise the deadly poison, that is to fill its ripened berries. Were our discernment of our own nature, as clear as of plants, we should probably perceive the embryo evil in it no less distinctly. μ.

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A little child, on first seeing the Thames, and being told it was a river, cried, *No, it can't be a river : it must be a pond.* His notion of a river had been formed from a little brook near his home ; and the largest surface of water he was familiar with was a pond. Happy will it be for that child, if, when all his notions are modified by long experience, he still retains such simplicity and reverence for the past, as to maintain the claim of the little brook to the name, which, he once supposed, especially belonged to it.

In the infancy of our spiritual consciousness how much do we resemble this child ! Every thought and feeling, in the little world in which our spirits move, becomes all-important : each "single spot is the whole earth" to us : and everything beyond is judged of by its correspondence to what goes on within it. If we perceive anything in others different from what we deem to be right, we are apt to exclaim, like the little child, that it cannot be right or true : and thus

our minds grow narrow and exclusive, at the very time when they have received the first impulse toward their enlargement. Such a state requires much gentleness and forbearance from those who are more advanced in their course, and have learnt to mistrust themselves more, and to look with more faith for the good around them, whatever its form may be. For the mind, when it is first "putting forth its feelers into eternity," is peculiarly sensitive, and needs to be led gradually, and to be left much to the workings of its own experience. If it is met repulsively, by an assumption of superior wisdom, it may either be driven back into a mere worship of self, in its various petty modes and forms; or, should the person be of a bolder temper, he will cast off all faith in that, which he once accounted so precious, and, instead of recognising the germ of manhood in his infant state, and waiting for its gradual development, will be tempted to deny that there was any kind of life or light in it.

If, in the birth and growth of the outward man, the imperfect substance is so sacred in the eyes of Him who forms it, that all our members are written in His book, and that He looks not at what it is in its imperfection, but at what it is to be in its perfection, how infinitely more precious and sacred should we esteem the development of the inner man! with what love and reverence should we regard

each member, however imperfect at first, and shelter it from everything that might check or distort its growth ! ε.

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It is a scandal that the sacred name of Love should be given by way of eminence to that form of it, which is seldomest found pure, and which very often has not a particle of real love in it. υ.

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In those hotbeds of spurious, morbid feelings, sentimental novels, we often find the lover, as he is misnamed, after he has irreparably wronged and ruined his mistress, pleading that he was carried along irresistibly by the violence of his love : and I am afraid that such pictures are only representations of what occurs far more frequently in actual life. Not that this absolves the writers. For, instead of allaying and healing the disease, they irritate and increase it. They would even persuade the victim of it that it is inevitable, nay, that it is an eruption and symptom of exuberant health. If however there be any case, in which it is plain that Violence is only Weakness grown rank, the bastard brother of Weakness, it is this. Such love is not the ethereal, spiritual, self-consuming, self-purifying flame, but the darkling, smouldering one, that spits forth sparks of light amid volumes of smoke, being crushed and almost extinguished by the damp, black, crumbling load

of the sensual appetites. So far indeed is sensual love from being the same thing with spiritual love, that it is the direct contrary, the hellish mask in which the fiend mimics and mocks it. For, while the latter enjoins the sacrifice of self to its object, and finds a ready obedience, the former is ravenous to sacrifice its object to self. U.

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“It is strange (says Novalis) that the real ground of cruelty is lust.” The truth of this remark flasht across me this morning, as I was looking into a bookseller’s window, where I saw *Illustrations of the Passion of Love* standing between two volumes of a *History of the French Revolution*. The same connexion is pointed out by Baader in his *Philosophical Essays* (i. p. 100). “This impotence of the spirit of lies, his inability to realize himself or come into being, is the cause of that inward fury, with which, in his bitter destitution and lack of all personal existence, he seizes, or tries to seize upon all outward existences, in order to propagate himself in and with them, but with and in all, being merely a destroyer and devourer, like a fierce flame, only brings forth a new death and new hunger, instead of the sabbatical rest of the completed, successful manifestation and incarnation. Hence the real spirit and purpose of murder and lust is one and the same, in every stage of being.” Again, in another passage, he says (p. 192): “*He who is not for Me*



*is against Me* ; and where the spirit of love does not dwell, there dwells the spirit of murder. This is proved even by those manifestations of sin or hatred, which seem the furthest removed from the desire of destruction or murder; as for instance in the ease with which the impulse of lust transforms itself into that of murder, whether the latter displays itself merely physically, or psychically, in what the French call *perdre les femmes*." The same terrible affinity is exprest by Milton in his catalogue of the inmates of hell.

Next Chemos, the obscene dread of Moab's sons.—  
 Peor his other name, when he enticed  
 Israel in Sittim, on their march from Nile,  
 To do him wanton rites, which cost them woe.  
 Yet thence his lustful orgies he enlarged  
 Even to that hill of scandal, by the grove  
 Of Moloch homicide ; lust hard by hate.

U.

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What is meant by Universal Philanthropy ? Love requires that its object should be something real, something positive and definite ; as is proved by all mythologies, in which the attributes of the Deity are impersonated, to satisfy the cravings of the imagination and of the heart : for the abstract God of philosophy can never excite anything like love. I can love this individual, or that individual ; I can love a man in all the might of his strength and of his weakness, in all the blooming fulness of his heart, and all the radiant

glory of his intellect : I can love every particular blossom of feeling, every single ray of thought : but the mere abstract, bodiless, heartless, soulless notion, the logical entity, Man, " sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything," affords no home for my affections to abide in, no substance for them to cling to.

But, although reality and personality are essential to him whom we are to regard with affection, bodily presence is by no means necessary to the perception of reality and personality. Vain and fallacious have been the quibbles of those sophists, who have contended that no action can take place, unless the agent be immediately, that is, as they understand it, corporeally present. Homer and Shakspeare have not ceased to act, and will not so long as the world endures. Nor does this action at all depend on the presence of their works before us. They cannot put forth all the energies of their genius, until they have purged themselves from this earthly dross, and become spiritual presences in the spirit. For nothing can act but spirit : matter is unable to effect anything, save by the force it derives from something spiritual. The golden chains, by which Anaxagoras fabled that the sun was made fast in the heavens, are only a type of that power of Attraction, or, to speak at once more poetically and more philosophically, of that power of golden Love, which is the life and the harmony of the universe.

True love is not starved, but will often be rather fed and fostered, by the absence of its object. In Landor's majestic language, in the Conversation between Kosciusko and Poniatowski, "Absence is not of matter: the body does not make it. Absence quickens our love and elevates our affections. Absence is the invisible and incorporeal mother of ideal beauty." Love too at sight, the possibility of which has been disputed by men of drowthy hearts and torpid imaginations, can arise only from the meeting of those spirits which, before they meet, have beheld each other in inward vision, and are yearning to have that vision realized. U.

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Life has two ecstatic moments, one when the spirit catches sight of Truth, the other when it recognises a kindred spirit. People are for ever groping and prying around Truth; but the vision is seldom vouchsafed to them. We are daily handling and talking to our fellow-creatures; but rarely do we behold the revelation of a soul in its naked sincerity and fervid might. Perhaps also these two moments generally coincide. In some churches of old, on Christmas Eve, two small lights, typifying the Divine and the Human Nature, were seen to approach one another gradually, until they met and blended, and a bright flame was kindled. So likewise it is when the two portions of our spiritual nature meet and blend,

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that the brightest flame is kindled within us. When our feelings are the most vivid, our perceptions are the most piercing; and when we see the furthest, we also feel the most. Perhaps it is only in the land of Truth, that spirits can discern each other; as it is when they are helping each other on, that they may best hope to arrive there. u.

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The loss of a friend often afflicts us less by the momentary shock, than when it is brought back to our minds some time afterward by the sight of some object associated with him in the memory, of something which reminds us that we have laught together, or shed tears together, that our hearts have trembled beneath the same breeze of gladness, or that we have bowed our heads under the same stroke of sorrow. So may one behold the sun sink quietly below the horizon, without leaving anything to betoken that he is gone; while the sky seems to stand unconscious of its loss, unless its chill blueness in the East be interpreted into an expression of dismay. But anon rose-tinted clouds,—call them rather streaks of rosy light,—come forward in the West, as it were to announce the promise of a joyous resurrection. v.

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There are days on which the sun makes the clouds his chariot, and travels on curtained behind them. Weary of shining before a drowsy

thankless world, he covers the glory of his face, but will not quite take away the blessing of his light ; and now and then, as it were in pity, he withdraws the veil for a moment, and looks forth, to assure the earth that her best friend is still watching over her in the heavens ; like those occasional visitations by which the Lord, before the birth of the Saviour, assured mankind that he was still their God. U.

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Nothing is further than Earth from Heaven :  
nothing is nearer than Heaven to Earth. U.

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*I will close this Volume with the following Ode to Italy, written by my Brother nearly thirty years ago, in November 1818. What would then have been deemed a very bold, rash guess, may now perhaps be regarded as a prophecy about to receive its fulfilment. The interest which every scholar, every lover of poetry and art, every reverent student of history, must feel in the fate of Italy, was deepened in my brother by his having been born at Rome.*

#### ITALY.

Strike the loud harp; let the prelude be,  
Italy, Italy !  
That chord again, again that note of glee . .  
Italy, Italy !  
Italy ! O Italy ! the very sound it charmeth ;  
Italy ! O Italy ! the name my bosom warmeth.

---

High thoughts of self-devotions,  
Compassionate emotions,  
Soul-stirring recollections,  
With hopes, their bright reflexions,  
Rush to my troubled heart at thought of thee,  
My own illustrious, injured Italy.

Dear queen of snowy mountains,  
And consecrated fountains,  
Within whose rocky heaven-aspiring pale  
Beauty has fixt a dwelling  
All others so excelling,  
To praise it right, thine own sweet tones would fail,  
Hail to thee! Hail!  
How rich art thou in lakes to poet dear,  
And those broad pines amid the sunniest glade  
So reigning through the year,  
Within the magic circle of their shade  
No sunbeam may appear!  
How fair thy double sea!  
In blue celestially  
Glittering and circling!—but I may not dwell  
On gifts, which, decking thee too well,  
Allured the spoiler. Let me fix my ken  
Rather upon thy godlike men,  
The good, the wise, the valiant, and the free,  
On history's pillars towering gloriously,  
A trophy reared on high upon thy strand,  
That every people, every clime  
May mark and understand,  
What memorable courses may be run,  
What golden never-failing treasures won,  
From time,  
In spite of chance,  
And worsèr ignorance,  
If men be ruled by Duty's firm decree,  
And Wisdom hold her paramount mastery.

What art thou now ? Alas ! Alas !  
     Woe, woe !  
 That strength and virtue thus should pass  
     From men below !  
 That so divine, so beautiful a Maid  
 Should in the withering dust be laid,  
 As one that—Hush ! who dares with impious breath  
     To speak of death ?  
 The fool alone and unbeliever weepeth.  
     We know she only sleepeth ;  
     And from the dust,  
     At the end of her correction,  
 Truth hath decreed her joyous resurrection :  
     She shall arise, she must.  
 For can it be that wickedness has power  
 To undermine or topple down the tower  
     Of virtue's edifice ?  
     And yet that vice  
 Should be allowed on sacred ground to plant  
     A rock of adamant ?  
     It is of ice,  
 That rock, soon destined to dissolve away  
 Before the righteous sun's returning ray.

But who shall bear the dazzling radiancy,  
     When first the royal Maid awaking  
 Darteth around her wild indignant eye,  
     When first her bright spear shaking,  
 Fixing her feet on earth, her looks on sky,  
 She standeth like the Archangel prompt to vanquish,  
 Yet still imploring succour from on high !  
 O days of wearying hopes and passionate anguish,  
     When will ye end !  
 Until that end be come, until I hear  
     The Alps their mighty voices blend,  
 To swell and echo back the sound most dear  
 To patriot hearts, the cry of Liberty,

I must live on. But when the glorious Queen  
As erst is canopied with Freedom's sheen,  
When I have prest, with salutation meet,  
And reverent love to kiss her honoured feet,

I then may die,

Die how well satisfied !

Conscious that I have watcht the second birth  
Of her I've loved the most upon the earth,

Conscious beside

That no more beauteous sight can here be given :  
Sublimier visions are reserved for heaven.



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